CS 250 Final Project

Shifting over to agile from waterfall can be a bit of change. Waterfall goes through development and the product life in steps, there is no going back. With agile you work in a more fluid and changeable environment. You can back at any point and at any time to fix a mistake or change something entirely. This does require a large amount of communication between teams and individual team members, but this isn’t a bad thing because this also builds team trust, overall bringing employees closer together. In our scrum team we had a product owner, scrum master, developer, and tester which is usually how it goes. The product owner works directly with the customer and helps facilitate feedback from them to the rest of the team. The product owner works with the outside forces such as customers and marketing allowing the rest of the team to develop the project according to the trends and requests of the customer. Throughout the development of the SNHU travel site our product owner held several customer meetings inquiring about specific features they wanted implemented into the website. This gave the team invaluable information to work on and provide exactly what the customer wanted and, in essence, shows what the product owner is capable of in a team.

The development team consists of the developers creating the product as well as the tester debugging and fixing as the product progresses. These two roles are insurmountable to the success of the project, without them it simply wouldn’t exist. The development team used the information gathered from the user meetings to pinpoint the most desired features and implement them immediately. Cutting down on time spent in production and giving our customers a sense of satisfaction as their voices were heard. This all leads into the final role the scrum master.

The scrum master is like the glue that brings everyone and everything together. With the scrum team communication is very important. Without communication the development team wouldn’t know the product owner was researching information for the project or they wouldn’t know there were bugs and so forth. There needs to be a constant flow of communication with many avenues to reach it and this is where the scrum master comes in. The scrum master is the director of all communication and sets up daily stand-up meetings as well as other communication resources like information radiators. Throughout the SNHU travel project we held a daily stand – up meeting to review work done and what was going to be accomplished that day as well as any general updates. We also had a whiteboard with sticky notes going depicting this information with a little more detail. The notes were moved to a finished column to help visualize the progress and information to the team. The agile method works beautifully but requires every role to work together otherwise things can fall through the cracks.

The scrum approach to projects allows for some freedom in mobility through projects. This enabled our product owner to gather user stories for the rest of the team and pinpoint high demand features. The customers requested specific things such as vacation spots based off of previous travel history, the top ten travel spots, and sorting options like only viewing cruise vacations. These specific requests help the development team focus on what is in demand and gives the customers a direct connection to the development of the product. There is no better way to build loyalty and a customer base than by asking their opinion and listening to them. With the information gathered the team worked hard on the features and delivered a stellar product. None of this would be available in waterfall not because waterfall is a worse development style but because it doesn’t allow for the fluid movement that agile does.

Throughout any project changes are bound to occur and with waterfall that can mean scrapping the entire project and starting over. With agile you can easily shift focus and re-organize on the fly to finish projects in a fast-moving world. Our team developed some additional features, based on customer request, for the SNHU travel site. About halfway through the development the product owner was informed of a new trend approaching and share holders wanted to shift focus to the development of that instead. The new trend was focused on detox and wellness which was a completely different direction than vacation sorting. This would sound like a disaster but with some re-planning we were able to focus on this new trend and push it out without any delays. The development team had the framework already developed and simply needed to shift a few things over for the implementation of the new vacation type. The scrum agile approach to development allowed the mobility to change course midway through a project. Agile is focused on constant updates and changes whereas waterfall is procedural, and step based, both have there place in projects but in this case agile was needed to completely shift focus in the middle of a project while still getting both goals completed.

Being the test group for ChadaTech’s transition to agile allowed the team to get some great firsthand experience. With agile communication is very important and lends itself to the success of the method. The team jumped right into communicating in a very natural way and, in this case, it wasn’t difficult. In a stand-up meeting we shared our roles and updated the team on our individual progress. From this point on we all had to agree on one change from each member of the group. This forces collaboration and keeps the discussion going on further than the surface level. This is also the point where I see the most conflict arising and there will need to be measures taken to stop those.

The SCRUM approach, in this case, was the best approach for the SNHU travel project. Dealing with a shift in focus mid project and iterating to meet the customers specific needs and requests could only be done in agile. Waterfall in this situation would have to start completely over due to its procedural step by step method. Agile also provides multiple avenues for communication. These include things like daily stand-up meetings and information radiators. With this tool in place the teams can effectively communicate at all times to best complete the project. Utilizing these principles are a key factor in our success with the travel project. The agile approach doesn’t come without its faults though. Having excellent communication practices is great but the agile approach can often lead to its downfall too. If teams aren’t properly communicating, then everything falls through. Another issue is a lack of a definitive end date; agile runs on sprints which are short bursts that complete little by little until its eventually finished. Scum was perfect in this situation but has its pros and cons but we will definitely be comparing the two for future projects.

Citations :

SNHU (n.d). *Module five product owner and scrum agile team.*

http://snhu-media.snhu.edu/files/course\_repository/undergraduate/cs/cs250/storyline/mod5/story\_html5.html