Sprint Review and Retrospective

Every member of the Scrum team plays a key role in the development and success of the project. The Product Owner Christy was the bridge between the team and the stakeholders. To come up with user stories she focused on getting input from customers about desired features. These user stories would turn into the requirements for our vacation booking system. She was also able to reprioritize the backlog if the focus ever shifted to stay aligned with the project goal.

With myself holding the role of Scrum Master, I made sure to hold Scrum events to further the team’s communication and productivity. During standups, I kept the team focused discussions that pertained to the spring goals while encouraging more open and honest communication. If the project direction ever changed, I made sure the team was able to easily pivot toward the new plan. The Agile methodology allows for flexibility in the team to make changes on the fly.

Nicky the developer and Brian the tester showed how they can adapt when requirements change during the project. Nicky was proactive about getting clarification through emails where she was direct and gave time requirements for responses. This kept her work aligned with the stakeholders’ expectations. Meanwhile, Brian's role in maintaining quality assurance was important for meeting the criteria for the project. His detailed questions about user stories prevented misunderstandings and reduced rework.

Using the Scrum Agile framework, we took an iterative approach to the project’s development. This allowed us to break down the complexities of the project into more manageable user stories to deliver value. We were able to refine features through feedback gathered in focus groups by the Project Owner. Our developer then implemented these features in iterations while our tester ensured these features met quality standards through test cases. This process was very much iterative and is in contrast to traditional methods such as waterfall, where requirements are hard-locked in early on and can’t be easily changed. The Agile process allows the team to be more flexible and adjust features of the project based on real feedback. If a big pivot is required, we aren’t forced to scrap existing work done, instead, we can reprioritize the backlog to align with the new direction. This adaptability was only possible because of Agile’s emphasis on incremental delivery and inspecting frequently.

At the halfway point of this project, the focus was shifted to wellness vacations, a big change that would derail progress in a waterfall development style. But in our Agile approach, we were able to adapt thanks to our Product Owner reprioritizing the backlog ensuring the most important features moved to the top of the backlog. During the sprint planning phase, we reassessed our plan while maintaining the original timeline. Having flexibility like this is key to the Agile model of development. Rather than having to restart the whole project, we made incremental adjustments. The team’s developer reviewed existing features to determine what could be reused while the tester updated test cases to fit the new focus. The team’s ability to pivot without losing momentum demonstrates the power of the Agile model.

Effective communication is the backbone of our success in an Agile model. Daily standups keep the team on target by discussing blockers early on. When there was ambiguity in the UI design requirements, the developer sent out a targeted email with specific questions to guarantee a quick resolution to the issue of uncertainty. The testers' detailed clarification of user stories also prevented misalignment by asking precise questions. Eliminating guesswork was key in keeping alignment with the stakeholders’ expectations. These examples highlight how structured, proactive communication in Agile prevents delays and fosters collaboration.

References:

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