Final Project: Sprint Review

Benjamin Cleary

CS-250 Software Development Lifecycle

Prof. Joseph Martinez

In any project, the failure or success of that project is due to the efforts of the whole team rather than any one individual and that is also the case for the SNHU Travel project. Each role in the team had a unique and required effect on the outcome that required similar but different approaches and perspectives that enabled the success of the project. This effect starts with the Product Owner. The Product Owner needs to understand what the customer wants from the project and have the skills and knowledge to translate those wants and needs into something that is actionable by the rest of the development team. User story creation and management is where this skill is vital. Not only understanding what the story needs to tell the team initially, but also being aggressive in getting feedback and incorporating that into the user story can make or break how that user story fulfills what the customer wants. The Scrum Master can have a positive impact on the user story development and grooming process but also in how the team writ large operates. By taking charge of enforcement of Scrum-agile methodologies, including running the daily Scrum, team dynamics, and enabling communication, the Scrum Master becomes the glue that holds the team together and moves it towards success. The Developers and Testers of the team with the organizational input of the Scrum Master and goals of the Product Owner are the team members that bring the sprint to a successful close and are the ones in the “trenches”. While two distinct groups of individuals, these groups require the most collaboration to bring the project to fruition. The Developers have to work within the group to write the code and help cross train members on the team with unfamiliar concepts but also work with the Testers so that they can write testing regimes that can effectively test the software and enable regression testing. On the other side, the Testers have to work with the developers to not only effectively test the program, but understand how the developers are writing the software and become more familiar with coding as well and help driving user stories to completion.

Completing user stories is the primary method by which progress is tracked and what ultimately defines whether the sprint was successful. How those stories are defined and what criteria needs to be tested successfully as done, plays a major role not only in how the code for that story is developed but also the testing regime used to validate that story. By clearly defining in simple terms what the user wants to do and for what reason they are doing it, the development and test teams can accurately and effectively work towards completion of the story and can be confident that their work fulfills the requirements. This is especially important when inevitable interruptions and changes occur. When these changes occur, having not only new clear requirements added, and obsolete requirements get removed and can provide the team with a clear path forward that doesn’t invalidate all of their previous work. With a shift in those requirements, many things that have already been coded don’t necessarily require rebuilding from scratch so much as repurposing what has already build to what the new requirements are. In the case of the update that changed the format from a vacation list to a specific style of vacation, all that needed to change were the assets for the new vacations instead of building out an entirely new program from scratch. Since the change was clearly delineated, the team was able to adapt quickly and pivot to the new requirement with relative ease. This communication is vital to getting everyone on the same page quickly and effectively.

Maintaining open lines of communication was vital to pass information to the right people at the right time. For the project, the message board was a useful tool as an information radiator for many of the topic of discussion and some of the coordinating such as times and dates people were available for meetings or chats. By having everyone’s email, short turn around items could be handled without needing someone to check a message board and instead got the message delivered to them directly. Additionally, an active role in both was required in order to drive for the results needed for the project and make sure everyone was on the same page. And while these tools were helpful for communication other tools could be even more powerful.

Jira is an agile project management tool that combines many aspects of scrum methodologies effectively. By providing an online source to promulgate things like user stories and organize them can become a far more powerful communication tool than a message board or email. This visual information is more efficient in conveying the ideas and flow of a project and when used in concert with message boards and emails can provide the solid groundwork from which a team can excel.

Overall, the Scrum-agile approach to the SNHU Travel project provided a number of positive aspects and some negative ones but as a whole was effective in completing the project and delivering a good product. The ability to shift focus and adapt to changing requirements or after those requirements get refined enabled production to move forward while out having as much down time or waste as a traditional project plan would have had. Additionally, having more cross collaborations in the team provided cross domain knowledge transfer that, while hard to measure in the immediate, will pay dividends on team efficiency and effectiveness down the road. On the other hand, there were some negative aspects. The nature of the Scrum-agile paradigm infers multiple iterations, and if that is not the case, it can create a false sense that if something can’t be accomplished it can be fixed in the next sprint. Along the lines of limited iteration, requirement changes can ultimately add time that cannot be made up if there is not sprint after the current one, and can result in a product that is confused and misses the mark in terms of customer needs. In the end, while an agile approach was helpful in completion of the project, the way the project was run might have benefited from a hybrid approach that could address all the specifics revolving around the SNHU travel project.