**Sprint Retrospective/Review**

Our team has been hard at work to complete the SNHU Travel Project that was assigned to us. The project consisted of working on the SNHU Travel website to show the user some of the top destinations that the user could go on. In order for the project to be successful, every member of the team needed to do their part.

Our product owner (Christy) had to first get an understanding of the task by asking the client (Amanda) to describe their product and how they want it to operate. This information is collected and discussed with a Scrum master (Ron) so that proper planning of Scrum events and the creation of a team charter can occur. The product owner then gathered information from a focus group about the changes that the group would like to see present in the product. These changes are collected and converted into user stories which help categorize the tasks in the sense of priority and size to the task. The categorization of task urgency and size can assist the developer (Nicole) in determining which tasks should be completed first as well as the predicted amount of time it would take to complete the task. Once Nicole had made some progress implementing the user stories into the product, it was up to our tester (Brian) to start testing the product and making sure the changes that were requested were functioning properly. During this time, it’s also up to the tester to pose any questions about the specific user stories that could enhance those specific areas of the program. The questions in this particular project were questions about the order the list should be presented (10-1 or 1-10) and if the list should include a variety of all destinations, the ones preferred by the user, or strictly one type of vacations destination. Even though there was a major adjustment to how our product operated, our team was able to work on the project without having to make any adjustments to the deadline.

A major key to our success was the fact that we were using a Scrum-agile approach towards the development of the project. With a Scrum-agile based approach, communication amongst all team members is heavily encouraged. One practice that helps with this communication requirement are the Scrum-meetings that occur daily to discuss what has occurred with the project as well current or potential problems that need to be addressed. Agile is a methodology that prioritizes it’s ability to remain adaptable as well as continuously improving in short iterations. The small and constant improvements on the product help us to make sure all of our user story conditions were met before releasing the product. One major change had to happen to our program, with the focus being from a variety of vacation styles to making it primarily wellness and detox vacation destinations.

Even though there was a major change to how our product would work, it did not alter our deadline date at all. This is mostly because the Scrum-agile approach of development embraces change and attempts to implement said change as fast and successfully as possible. Take for instance the wellness/detox change that had to be implemented into the project. During one of our team meetings, Christy had brought it to our attention that the destination style should be limited to wellness/detox vacations in anticipation of those destination types being sought after. After bringing up this change to the team, each member evaluated the sections they had completed as well as the work that would need to be done to finish implementing the change. For Christy, this involved re-prioritizing the backlog so that the change could be made without making any changes to the deadline of the project. For Brian, this involved reworking the test cases to reflect the new changes that are to be implemented into the program.

Communication is one of the key components in an Agile or Scrum-agile team that guarantees success if not an easy flowing project. As mentioned earlier, the daily Scrum meetings are one of the key examples as to how communication plays an important role in the Scrum-agile approach. In order for the user stories to be made, the product owner has to communicate with the key users to gain an understanding of the changes the users would want to see present in their program. Another great example of communication comes from when Brian was working on the test cases for the project. Brian had some questions about how the program would represent itself and needed further clarification on how the program should look and operate. So rather than waiting until the Scrum meeting to bring up these concerns, he instead emailed the product owner, Christy, his questions in hopes to clear up any misunderstandings of how the program operated.

Product backlog, user stories, and test cases were some useful organizational tools that were used during the project. The product backlog can be seen as a “to-do” list on the tasks needed to be completed in order to continue working on or improving the project. User stories, in my opinion, are on the most important organizational tools to use since it’s basically a list of what the target users want from the finished product. Once the user stories are filled out and then implemented into the program, the tester than can test the program and begin to develop test cases for each of the user stories. Test cases are used to evaluate the user story and whether or not the story is one task, or a collection of smaller tasks put together. Test cases also assist in labelling the pass/fail criteria for each user story.

As mentioned earlier, the Scrum-agile methodology has some principles that are really effective when it comes towards the development lifecycle of a program. One positive aspect of the agile methodology are the “sprint” iterations that occur during the development of the program. The concept of creating a functional version of the program to be tested and shown to important stakeholders helps the development process drastically. This is because the customer can see the product and decide if any other changes should be made to the program. The “Two Pizza Rule” for making a Scrum team is another great principle. With a team small enough to consume two large pizzas, this can allow for more concentrated work ono the areas of the program that need improvement.

It should be noted that the Scrum-agile methodology is not flawless, but rather a different approach to the development cycle as opposed to the waterfall methodology. One problem with this framework is that a project wouldn’t transfer well to another team due to the lack of documentation that occurs during the development cycle. In addition, the Agile model has a heavy dependency on the engagement and communication of the customer. Meaning that if the customer is unsure of what improvements need to be implemented into the program it can result a large dissatisfaction rate at launch. Since Agile doesn’t attempt to predict a large schedule like the waterfall model, this results in poor predictability and having to react to situations as they occur rather than have predicted them and have a solution already made.

When it comes down to whether or not the Scrum-agile framework was the best approach for the SNHU Travel project, I would have to say that it is. I believe that the flexibility offered within the Agile methodology and the Scrum events put together made for an easy going development cycle. Even with the abrupt change to the focus of our destination spots, with the open communication and quick response to adversity, our team was able to remain successful in being able to stick to the original launch date of the website.