Final Project: Sprint Review and Retrospective

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Throughout the development for the SNHU Travel project, an agile based approach was utilized as an experiment to test the effectiveness of the new development process. This process, through the use of practices and ideals explained in this paper, helped create a viable product in an efficient manner.

To begin, agile development utilizes smaller development teams that evolve to meet the requirements set upon them. The leader of said teams are the Scrum Masters. These team leaders are integral to team organization, running frequent meetings with their respective teams to plot development and ensure each team member has a purpose and is given time to express their concerns. Another key leadership role within the scrum team is the Product Owner, who serves as the middleman between the development team and the end users. Without them, the development team would not understand what the customer desires or if said desires change. Next are the developers themselves, which are the creators of the specific product. If the product owner and scrum master effectively do their jobs, the developers will know what needs to be done, how it should be done, and why it is being done in a certain way. Finally, the tester is a team member who is meant to promote a higher quality product through extensive testing of the product. This testing helps make sure the end user’s desires are addressed, therefore keeping the product desirable to the end user. Overall, each role is important to creating a great product in an efficient manner.

One key element of the development process are user stories, which are how the different steps of development put into different steps. Each user story is a detailed gameplan to develop a function or feature of the overall product. These user stories are made at the beginning of development and sorted based off importance. The stories are also important for quality assurance, typically used by testers to get an idea of why a feature is made and how the feature should work.

So how did this development cycle go? To start, the idea of a specialized list of top vacation packages was requested by SNHU Travel. Development started by creating user stories based off input given by SNHU Travel, given prioritization based off importance, then given to developers to complete. While the general idea of a top list of destinations remained throughout development, there were changes throughout the cycle. This is the greatest strength of agile, the ability to change the scope and focus of development mid cycle. During this introductory cycle, there were two key changes made during development. The first of an overall change from a list to a slideshow, mainly because the end users desired it. The second was a scope shift to destinations based off wellness vacations, which was desired by SNHU Travel because it was a projected trend. This flexibility allowed for the final product to appeal to both the end user and the customer without having to completely start over. Overall, the flexibility of agile coupled with the focus on user input led to a better program that met all expectations, including the unforeseen ones.

So agile led to a better product, but how did it create a better development team? The main upside of agile for development teams is the focus on communication. Generally, this new communication focus to work with each other easier while keeping the whole team on the same page all throughout development. One key element is the addition of special meetings, in this case short daily meetings known as daily scrums. These scrums were great because it allowed for assignment and progress to be processed daily. Additionally, it allowed for each team member to express specific problems or give relevant feedback on a regular basis. Another important element of communication of the inclusion of newer digital project management tools, such as digital reporting and digital message boards. These tools played key roles in provide team members with information quickly and easily, allowing for more of their time to be spent on the actual development process. Another benefit of great communication observed was the ease of communication between the team to finish user stories. The ease of communication, and the constant reevaluation of progress and goals, allowed for the team members to all understand what needed to be completed while giving easy avenues for questions. For example, the developers frequently asked the product owner questions about the user’s desire, and the testers frequently asked the developers and product owner about their intentions for the final product. Overall, I believe communication is key to the success of the development team, leading to a more cohesive and productive development team.

In conclusion, although this developmental shift to agile is initially unorthodox and foreign, it provides key benefits which were integral to the success of this development cycle. If the original methodology were used for this project, development would have restarted twice due to scope changes and the user’s recommendations would have either been discarded or led to longer development times. If user input and satisfaction are important, and the possibility of key changes being made during the development cycle are high, then I believe agile is the superior methodology. If the overall speed of development is more important, and the possibility of key changes being made during the development cycle are not high, then the waterfall methodology would likely still be more effective.

**References**

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