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Final Project

There are several roles in a Scrum-agile Team. They are all vital to the success of the team representing the needs and requirements of the customer. There is the Product Owner who is in charge of the communication with the customer, the Scrum Master who acts as the manager of the Development Team and the Development Team who does the actual development of the project. Within the Development Team are the coders, testers, designers, and any other roles that would be part of the development process.

The Product Owner is responsible for representing the customer. Their main job is to communicate with the customer and relay any and all information to the Scrum Master and Development Team. The Product Owner also keeps the customer grounded. Part of their job is knowing what is possible and where they would have to say no to the customer. They create the user stories and use them to build a product backlog of what needs to be done. They prioritize the backlog and feed this information to the Scrum Master and Development Team. Lastly it is the job of the Product Owner to oversee developmental stages. Beginning each sprint the product owner takes feedback from the customer, adds new requirements and readjusts the backlog and ensure the larger important things are being addressed.

Next is the Scrum Master. The Scrum Master is essentially the manager of the Development Team. While the Project Owner is there to represent to client, the Scrum Master is there to represent and support the Development Team. Their primary job is to keep the team efficient and productive by ensuring they have everything they need and foster communication to create a positive working environment. They are to hold daily meetings between the Development Team to keep them focused and resolve any issues. They also host the Product owner, clients, and stockholders to update them on progress at the end of each sprint. Also, at the end of each sprint there is a retrospective meeting with the Development Team to go over how they think the sprint went and if there is anything needed or that can be improved for the next sprint.

Lastly, we have the Development Team. This team is there to develop and produce the actual project being worked on. They are responsible for the designing, coding, testing, adjustments, and presentation of the project. They are responsible for keeping the backlog up to date and adjusting to any changes given to them by the Product Owner. The team is also to communicate what they are doing, what has been completed and any issues they run in to so they can be addressed.

One of the benefits of the Scrum-agile method is that the Development Team and divide and conquer different aspects of the project at the same time. As opposed to the waterfall method, this helps you when you have different segments of the project, and they can all be addressed concurrently. For example, the SNHU Travel project had 6 different user stories. Some of the stories were the slideshow format, the customization of recommended travel packagers, and being able to sort the travel packages by different categories. Each of these things can be worked on in the same sprint because the team members are all working simultaneously.

Another benefit of the Scrum-agile method is that the Product Owner can create new user stories as they arise and adjust the priority of the backlog as changes occur. For example, when the client of SNHU Travel wanted the website to focus on vacations that have to do with detox/ wellness. The user story was added, communication is sent out and the new requirement is prioritized as the Product Owner sees fit. If it is something that must be done immediately it can be moved to the top of the backlog and worked on as such. If it was something that isn’t as much of a priority it can be held till the beginning of the next sprint. This allows the changes to be considered without interrupting the whole project and having to start over.

When it comes to a successful agile process, there must be strong communication between the different team members and roles. When it comes to the Product Owner, they need to have face to face meetings with the customers to truly understand their needs. Then they must create the user stories and the backlog to communicate those needs to the team. The team must t­­­­hen have frequent meetings to stay on pace and discuss any issues they run into. This is called the daily standup. The daily standup usually includes the Development Team and the Scrum Master. These meetings occur each day at a set time to update each other on what each member has been doing since the last meeting, what they intend to do, and any issues they have been struggling with. It is here that they can offer quick advice on issues or coordinate lending a hand. These meetings are quick as to not interrupt time and the flow of the project.

When it comes new requirements or changes in the user stories the Product Owner must get this information to the team quickly. A good way the Development Team can confirm the changes or inquire with follow-up questions is to send an e-mail to the Product Owner. A quick e-mail can also be sent to the testers, so they know what to expect. This can be effective in some instances because it is fast and gets to the point. You also get a quick response and can keep going with your work.

Communication is a big Scrum- agile principle that helps the team be successful. In addition to communication another principle that keeps scrum successful is the basis of the Sprint. A Sprint in the agile methodology is a cycle based on a predetermined time frame where the team focuses on specific tasks that are at the highest priority of the product backlog. At the beginning of each Sprint there is a planning meeting, so everyone knows what the priorities are. At the end of each sprint there are two important meetings. The first is the Sprint Review. This is where the progress is presented to the client. They get to see how things are coming along and give feedback to the Product Owner on their thoughts. The other meeting is the Sprint retrospective. This meeting is the Development Team and Scrum Master going over the efficiency of the Sprint and coming up with ideas to make it more productive. The practice of the Sprint is very effective and keeps everyone informed.

It is very common for Scum Teams to use a Scrum Board. This is a board typically with three or four columns to categorize the items from the product backlog. Each item starts in the first column which will just be a list what needs to be done. As a team member works on an item, they can write their name on that items card and move it to the “In-Progress” column. Depending on if they are also going to test it or pass it off to another team member there is sometimes a review column called “Review”, “Validate”, or “Testing”. Once the item is fully tested and ready it gets moved to the final column, “Done”. This board is great because it tells the team what is being worked on and who is responsible for it. It also shows what else must be worked on. Another way to stay organized is to list the items not yet in progress in order of importance.

While having this board in the office where everyone can see is great there are also digital tools that allow this to be seen from anywhere. Software like Microsoft’s Azure Boards takes this board and adds the automation of Power Bi to keep everyone up to date. With Power Bi each person can have a personalized dashboard with important links and reports showing, what needs to be worked on, what is in-progress, what is done, and the overall performance of the team. You can keep the user stores there along with important calendar reminders and forms for people experiencing issues. It can be your one-stop-shop for everything related to the project.

With the above-mentioned benefits of the agile methodology, I feel it was the proper approach for the SNHU Project. From keeping the customer informed, to the team staying informed and being able to update the backlog on the fly. The agile method also allowed us to work on all several different items of the project at the same time to show progress at the end of each Sprint. It is efficient, thorough, flexible, and gives a great client experience by keeping them up to date. The Agile method was the correct choice in this project.