Sprint Review and Retrospective

Throughout the SNHU Travel project, my team and I worked hard to pull the project together. My product owner set our priorities and was diligent in grooming the backlog to make sure the team’s current tasks were clearly defined. They also had meetings with customers and investors to gather feedback, allowing us to change aspects of the project if need be. This was done when we went through excel and put together user stories from the slideshow we watched. My job as Scrum Master is to make sure my team is engaged and that all their needs to complete the project are met. This means I made sure that we followed appropriate practices and discussed with my developers and testers about any needs or concerns they had, if so, I did my best to address them promptly to prevent anything from hindering our progress. My developers are the heart of the team, and the project wouldn’t be possible without them. They design the code and therefore most of the project; they can put more of themselves into a project than everyone else on the team, they just need clear direction from the product owner and scrum master to tell them the direction we need to go. Because of our developers, we also get working models to present to stakeholders. This was also shown through the user stories assignment, especially the second round where we refined them and sent clarification emails to our product owner (Christy). Devs are given directions, and they write code to follow them, such as the vacation slideshow, where we changed to only focus on wellness retreats. Lastly, the testers on our project set clear cases for passing and failing criteria for the development team, kind of keeping them in scope of the project and in a way, highlighting the most important aspects of what clients and stakeholders want to see. The refined user stories assignment reflected this when we had to establish what was the exact intended response to a user action (passing case).

Scrum and Agile approaches help with breaking down these user stories and all the important details of them will go into the product backlog and then implement in the next sprint. Once user stories are split up and prioritized, they will be sorted by importance for consecutive sprints, like how in our spreadsheets we had to sort user stories by High priority, or low priority. User stories can also be discussed among the team if anyone needs clarification or if the value/priority of the story needs to be reevaluated. When the scrum team runs into an interruption, usually something small should be able to be fixed by the developer team. Larger interruptions could require more drastic measures such as increasing the length of sprints to give more time or even adding a limit to how many tasks from the product backlog can be in progress at one time. This would create a lesser chance of having unfinished tasks piling up in the product backlog, encouraging progress. During this course, we had the interruption of changing the focus of vacation packages to wellness only destinations/trips. Due to using agile, we were able to adjust what we already had to meet the new requirements, putting other things on pause to handle that first to present to stakeholders.

Communication is essential to Scrum, it is the backbone of the processes; pretty much everything will involve communication with members of your team. Our communication as a team involved our discussion board posts. We had to present ideas and respond to the ideas posted by our teammates. Our responses and agreements/arguments for our teammates processes and reasonings also had a deadline, sort of like a sprint. In my role for that I was a developer and mostly communicated with a tester and our product owner. I used Two Pizza Teams and Sprint Planning as my two top choices, but after some input from our tester on our product owners post, I saw the direction she was going and agreed with her assessments, so I was on board with her plan.

Organizational tools in Scrum are beneficial, and when used correctly, can shorten development time. Organization tools such as Jira have built in functions for teams to look at their sprint plans, their product backlog, and an issue tracking system, giving visual insight to the current needs and direction of the project. Functions in organizational tools aid in Sprint Planning, are helpful during Sprint Reviews, and just make the general work easier during Sprints. Being able to visualize a product backlog through Jira, for example, can make the process of combing through the backlog easier, and rearranging tasks during Sprint Reviews if necessary, can flow much better with a visual implementation of each task. Like moving puzzle pieces around to see where they would fit best, just in terms of time management and progress instead of a picture.

The pros of Scrum-Agile include receiving continuous feedback, flexibility, increased efficiency, and better-quality work. This makes Scrum-Agile good for complex projects (with limits) and smaller teams with some cohesiveness and experience. During this project, flexibility was instrumental, especially during that shift in focus we had. If the program had not been designed around agile methods, having a functioning model by the end of the week (our “sprint”) would have been near impossible. On the flip side, not having a team and only one group discussion the project seemed to be lacking communication aspects that are heavily relied on in agile. I feel the one group discussion we did only scratches the basics on how to start planning something. However, I do feel compared to the waterfall method, agile was the best way to go for this project. The limitations of waterfall would have made the project much harder with lack of consistent feedback, and the not having a working model at the end of each sprint. With waterfall methodology, you build up one consistent project and don’t get the first working model until closer to the end of the project completion date, which would have been horribly detrimental when we shifted the focus to wellness destinations, capable of derailing the entire project. If I had to choose from any methodology, I think Kanban would have been compatible with the SNHU Travel Project, as it maintains flexibility but is more task oriented by tracking each work in-progress. Especially since this course is online, I feel Kanban would have worked well as we functioned without doing meetings and some of the tasks were repetitive (even if I never mastered the .jar file), and the lack of stakeholders.