For the past couple of months I have been working on the SNHU Travel project using a Scrum-Agile approach. This has been a tremendous learning experience as well as very rewarding through developing the SNHU Travel top five destination slideshow. There was much to learn over the course of this project, especially when it comes to the Scrum-Agile aspect of it all. I have assumed every role of the scrum team in this time and for this Sprint Retrospective I am assuming the role of Scrum Master yet again. One thing that is amazing about the Agile approach is how every team role contributes so much to the project goal. The Agile approach is reliant on team interaction and collaboration and that is what makes this approach to the SDLC so valuable. It is such an efficient way for a team to operate and it allows every team member to feel important and not overwhelmed.

The first time I assumed the role of Scrum Master I had to complete a team charter that laid the foundation of the SNHU Travel project. The team charter essentially provides the timebox as well as the result expected from the upcoming Sprint. It also provided basic rules of behavior as well as communication guidelines. The rules of behavior that I focused on as Scrum Master were the rules I felt were most important for the team's success. The rules I selected were team members would respect each other, the team will have open communication, constructive criticism is welcomed, and everyone must accept responsibility for their actions and the results of their appointed tasks. Communication guidelines were pretty simple as I chose that there would be daily meetings to discuss progress, meeting notes would be recorded and sent out to all team members, and all team members must be present for the meetings. The Scrum Master is essential in organizing the team and ensuring the success of the team. It is absolutely important for a Scrum Master to be a great leader and an exceptional motivator. I believe the Scrum Master must be constantly encouraging their team so that everyone stays motivated to put their best effort forward. This was the main goal for me when I assumed the role of Scrum Master.

The next role I assumed in the SNHU Travel project was that of the Product Owner. The Product Owner plays a crucial role in the success of the team because they make most of the decisions on what the final product should be. They are also the main facet for customer and user interactions. As Product Owner I was in charge of developing the user stories which are very important to the SDLC. User stories are expectations set on the product by a product owner having a meeting with the product users. The user provides specific features they would like to see as well as why they would like to see these features. Allowing user input in the SDLC and company management in general is essential to the performance of a product or company. If you cater to the needs of the user our product and or company will be much more successful because it leads to more customer satisfaction.

The next role I assumed for the SNHU Travel project was the tester role. The tester contributes to the team in a very special way. The tester, as the name suggests, develops the test cases and ensures that the product is functioning correctly. As the tester I had to develop test cases and these would have been very helpful if I had been developing an actual SNHU Travel website. The test cases are developed by giving simple instructions on what to click or do on the SNHU Travel website and what the expected result is. Without test cases it would be difficult to notice if part of the “website” had not been functioning properly. Overall, the tester is an essential role to the Scrum Team that carries out testing of the product, which results in a much better product in the end.

The final role I assumed, and the last role is the developer role. The developer is just as important to the team as anyone else and perhaps maybe even more. As the developer I had to produce the functioning SNHU Travel website code. This was my favorite role to assume as I am used to programming and I enjoy it far more than filling out paperwork like test cases and team charters. The developer is definitely the role that I would most like to have in a Scrum team because of this. While every team member contributes so much to the project, without the developers there would be no product in the end. They make everything come together by actually making the product or code.

The scrum-agile approach was absolutely crucial to the SDLC for this project in every single way. For one, it was integral to the completion of the user stories in such a short timeframe. Using the agile approach is very helpful in this case because there was a relatively small time box for this project. And agile allows a team to move very quickly in the SDLC. Since everyone is working on everything all at once it allows for the team to be much more efficient and complete all of those user stories. Also, there was one point where some major changes were made to the project and what was expected from it. This would have been a very stressful event if we were using the waterfall approach because it doesn’t allow for big changes like this to be made in the middle of the SDLC. However, we were using a scrum-agile approach so whenever this change came we were ready for it. The agile approach is all about being able to make changes and change expectations, even in the middle of a sprint. This is why it was such a painless thing when this happened because it didn’t take much extra work to undergo this change.

There were a few times when we had to focus on the communication aspect of the scrum team during a project. We were required to draft some sample emails to different members on the team regarding revisions that were being made and we needed some clarification. Here is one of the emails we used so you can see how effective a simple email can be:

To: Christy

Subject: Top Five Destinations Revision

Dear Christy,

I would like some clarification on the revisions that you are wanting us to make on the top five destinations list. You say that we need to focus on detox and wellness locations in our list now because they are very popular right now. I agree with this decision and feel that it would be great for the performance of the SNHU Travel website. However, for most people a detox and wellness vacation would fall into one of the following categories and I would like for you to tell me which you would like to focus on or if you want them spread out evenly. The categories to choose from are:

* Hiking
* Camping
* Spa
* Resort
* Nature Retreat

Please reply with your decision on which types of destinations you would like to focus on.

Thanks,

Walker Karnes

Overall, the scrum-agile approach and all of the principles that come with it were extremely effective in facilitating this project. Without the incremental development and collaboration of team members there’s no way a big project could have been completed this quickly. Also, the major focus on customer satisfaction and the respect of all team members contributed to the success of this project. As I said before, if your product is shooting for customer satisfaction it will be much more successful and that’s exactly what we did with this project. We gave the customer what they wanted and this project was a huge success because of the scrum-agile approach.