**ROLES OF THE SCRUM TEAM**

During the duration of this course, I engaged in various capacities within the Scrum team, such as Scrum Master, Product Owner, Tester, and Developer. This diverse experience underscored the necessity for a comprehensive grasp of one's role, as well as an understanding of the interconnectedness of team roles in ensuring the successful delivery of a high-quality project. Immersing oneself in agile methodology within practical settings reveals the critical significance of effective communication and shared responsibility across the entire team.

**SCRUM MASTER**

Starting the project off with the role of a Scrum Master offered numerous advantages. One aspect I particularly appreciated was the spirit of collaboration, where every team member is committed to each other's success as much as their own, if not more. Activities such as sprint planning, daily stand-ups, code review, and sprint retrospective meetings were indispensable components of development, and it falls upon the Scrum Master to facilitate these meetings and nurture the agile team's comradery. Each of these rituals play a pivotal role in fostering team collaboration, enhancing efficiency, promoting accountability, maintaining focus, and encouraging self-organization.

During sprint planning and daily stand-ups, it's crucial to review completed tasks, outline the day's objectives, and assign responsibilities to team members. Setting daily goals collectively ensures a manageable workload for individuals and minimizes the risk of prolonged stagnation on any single task. Moreover, these meetings serve as forums for conflict resolution, task prioritization, and realigning of estimates based on newfound conditions.

In my role as a Scrum Master, I assumed the responsibility of structuring the agenda for daily stand-up meetings and starting the conversations with fellow team members with effective communication. This experience helped me understand how critical these meetings were in initiating sprints and setting the tone for productive workdays. Each of these Scrum Meetings complemented one another, ensuring the comprehensive coverage of tasks and fostering accountability within the team. Effective communication is vital for every member of the development team, but it's especially reliant upon the Scrum Master to facilitate information exchange among team members and ensure clarity regarding goals and tasks for everyone involved.

**PRODUCT OWNER**

While immersed in the role of the product owner, my primary was maximizing the project's value and guiding the development team's efforts. Product owners bear the brunt of decision-making for the project, offering direction to the team and managing workload prioritization. Serving as the liaison between the client and the development team, it falls upon the product owner to ensure clarity of goals and alignment with business objectives. Undoubtedly, this role is extremely important and is crucial for starting any agile development project successfully. Striking a delicate balance between providing direction and avoiding micromanagement is crucial for the product owner. While it may be tempting to dictate the exact workload for each sprint, collaboration with the Scrum Master is essential to gauge team capacity and realistic timeframes. While it is vital for the development team to comprehend the overarching vision, fostering collaboration remains equally significant.

User stories play a pivotal role in task delegation and workload prioritization for the development team. Generating a product backlog and user stories necessitates conducting interviews or user meetings. Direct feedback from users not only clarifies project goals but also identifies crucial areas for prioritization. Team members engage directly with users to grasp their perspectives, challenges, and opportunities, paving the way for the product owner to craft the backlog and user stories, visually representing essential tasks aligned with the client's vision. These tools streamline task prioritization and delegation, enhancing project efficiency manifold. While crafting my own product backlog and user stories, the organizational benefits of visualizing the workload became apparent, significantly aiding project progression.

As the product owner, it is also my responsibility to adapt to when clients want a change in their program. This happened when during the project the client wanted to switch from just vacations to rehabilitation and health focused destinations. It was my job to refocus the team and program to realign with the client’s wants and wishes. I collaborated with the Scrum Master and together we had the team steer the project back on course.

**TESTER**

A tester within an agile team contributes to designing and carrying out tests to assess whether the product meets requirements or not. Through regular interaction with the product owner and other team members, alignment is ensured regarding the tests that user stories need to fulfill. Testing occurs throughout the design process, and it falls upon testers to pinpoint functioning parts of the project as well as areas needing improvement. Nevertheless, we've discovered that occasional failures are not entirely negative. Testers may encounter failures, but these instances are swiftly addressed, and insights gained are shared with the team. User stories play a crucial role in formulating test cases, particularly through their "acceptance criteria," which provide valuable information. Additionally, considering the size and priority of each story aids in distributing workload effectively among team members.

Upon receiving user stories from the product owner, it's common for testers to require additional details for clarity. This may prompt them to reach out to the product owner before initiating test case development. During my tenure as a tester, there was an instance where I needed further information from the product owner, leading me to send an email requesting clarification.

“Dear Christy,

I have taken a look at your user stories and am developing test cases for the different features to

determine whether the product passes or fails. I need a bit more detail so that I can use more specific metrics to clearly define my test cases. Can you answer the following questions for me?

User Story One

• Do all the “Top 10” trips need to be listed on the same page or should they be listed separately

(like with a slideshow—big picture up top and description below)?

• Should the list count down from 10 to 1 or start with #1?

• Are we doing a top-ten list for a specific type of vacation or will it include all types of vacation

packages based on popularity?”

Communication like this serves as an effective means to express the tester's needs, prompting a response and facilitating project progression. Additionally, it fosters collaboration among team members by encouraging discussion about project details. As communication is paramount in agile practices, engaging with the product owner beforehand and gathering necessary information ensures the development of test cases heads in the right direction. User stories serve as valuable starting points for the development team, offering a structured framework for project objectives. By proactively seeking clarification, testers pave the way for a smooth transition into development, minimizing potential obstacles.

**DEVELOPER**

A communication practice that has greatly benefited me this semester is using an Information Radiator, such as a kanban board. Breaking down my entire project into manageable steps and visually organizing everything has been incredibly helpful. During sprint planning I often feel overwhelmed when tasks are listed in a condensed format, so having them broken down into smaller, more manageable pieces has been a game-changer. This approach helps me maintain a steady pace throughout the week and keeps my stress levels in check.

Agile project-management tools like JIRA help teams work better together by keeping all project information in one place. For example, team members can create tasks and track their progress easily. These tools also show a summary of how the project is going, helping teams see what's going well and where they might need to improve. By using these tools, teams can stay organized, communicate better, and get their work done more efficiently. For instance, JIRA allows teams to create user stories that encapsulate specific requirements or features. These user stories can then be broken down into smaller tasks, assigned to team members, and tracked through various stages of completion.

**RETROSPECTIVE**

I believe that the Scrum-agile approach was the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project. If we were using the waterfall method when the client demands changed from normal vacations to detox and health vacations, we would have had to restart the project accordingly. Since we were instead taking an agile approach, we were able to incorporate the new needs into our already existing workflow and we were quickly able to adapt to the new features the client requested. The clarity of work during the project allowed me to see what needed changing and where.

There are numerous pros in the Scrum-agile approach such as high flexibility, customer collaboration, continuous improvement, reduced risk. The flexibility of the planning for the project allowed me to deal with any changes accurately and effectively in client demands for this project. Since there was a collaborative effort with the client, we were able to have our questions on features and feedback answered in real time to deliver the best possible program to the client. This allowed us to continuously improve and as the client saw our progress this reduced the risk of having the client upset or back out of the project completely.

Several of the cons include adaptability challenges, team dynamics, and risk management. Frequent changes in project requirements can sometimes lead to scope creep or a lack of focus and cost the team time and money while trying to complete the project. Without strong leadership and clear roles and responsibilities, teams may struggle to coordinate effectively and resolve conflicts in a timely manner. Without proper attention to technical excellence and continuous improvement, teams may encounter challenges in maintaining product quality and scalability over time.

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