CS-250

Journal Week 6

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***Directions***

*In this final journal assignment, you will evaluate the importance of communication on an Agile team and how effective communication practices support work on a development project. Use the following questions to guide your last assignment concerning Agile communication practices and project-management tools. Apply what you have learned from your experience in each role within the Scrum Team.*

* *What communication practices (such as information radiator, Scrum events, and so on) can create openness and transparency in a Scrum Team? Why?*
* *Consider an example from the SNHU Travel assignments or from the group discussions in this course that helped your team complete their work. What communication practices were particularly effective?*
* *Describe how an Agile project-management tool (such as JIRA, Azure Boards, or RTC) can help coordinate and increase efficiency within the team. Be certain to consider a tool and not a Scrum event.*

*What communication practices (such as information radiator, Scrum events, and so on) can create openness and transparency in a Scrum Team? Why?*

The best communication practices include face to face events such as the daily stand-ups. These events encourage information sharing and clarifications in real time rather than using delayed communication techniques such as burn-down boards, status boards, emails, etc.

Real-time events such as the daily scrum allows a short summary of task completed, help needed, and tasks planned which also allows for a group to offer support, offer quick insights, or trigger a side-line discussion to allow more detailed discussions to occur with only the relevant team-members.

Delayed communication techniques still promote communications, they inherently include an element of delayed response which ultimately can slow down progress if a real-time response is needed. The preferred approach will be to reach out to the group in real-time and use the other information radiators for larger picture alignments.

For example, a burn-down board will only provide a high level of the group showing the overall status of the efforts from the sprint, is it ahead of commitment, behind, or tracking, this is a great summary, but won’t solve any real-time productivity, but may trigger an interaction to understand better.

A status board can covey a sense of project is going well or has many issues, but again, this is only a generic red/yellow/green color chart typically which can alert to issues, but a visual inspection won’t show the issues causing the red/yellow codes.

*Consider an example from the SNHU Travel assignments or from the group discussions in this course that helped your team complete their work. What communication practices were particularly effective?*

I think the most effective example was the product owner providing the straw-man example of the slide-show format along-side the changes to the content desired. This allowed the desired format to be shared with a working example while not being overly invested in timewise. This allowed the development team to visualize the output method more clearly while also not overly specifying the methods and contents allowing the developers to complete the changes to their preferred methods. This also allowed the testers to begin retooling their test cases as required to accommodate the new format while the developers were still making initial efforts.

Another effective example is the use of user stories. The user stories are much easier to internalize the goal of the story than reading a list of distilled requirements. This allows the development team to understand clearly what the end goal is and how the users are likely to utilize the tool. This can allow greater insights that can lead to optimized interfaces, as well as more intuitive approaches to solving some problems.

*Describe how an Agile project-management tool (such as JIRA, Azure Boards, or RTC) can help coordinate and increase efficiency within the team. Be certain to consider a tool and not a Scrum event.*

Using a tool such as JIRA can greatly increase efficiency as it allows collecting information about a given task in detail, changing ownership of the task when activated, as well as moving the individual tasks into a sprint easily. The tool also allows automated summary information to be generated such as the status of not-started, investigation, working, completed, verification and done. These can then be used on burn-down charting that automatically updates daily/etc as required for information radiating.

During some tasks its necessary to assign a task between members which is also easily handled in the tool and developers can easily go back and forth between themselves and see if the task is theirs to manage or the other developers by using the “assigned to me” type of reports. This helps ensure each team member knows their actions and can act accordingly based on relative priority.