Sprint Review and Retrospective

Agile methodology is a project management method that encourages change throughout the life cycle of the project. One of the main types of agile methodology is the scrum-agile approach. In a scrum-agile approach the team is broken up into one Product Owner, one Scrum Master, The development team, and the testing team. The team compositions are small and are self-organizing. As opposed to the waterfall methodology, agile methods really encourage change and communication with the client throughout the life cycle of the project. As a scrum master for the SNHU travel project I will display why the agile methodology greatly increased our productivity and helped us create a great system for our client.

The Scrum-agile methodology consist of a small team with different roles that communicate with each other in order to be efficient. Each role has their own responsibilities that help the project move smoothly. To begin the Product Owner is the main role that communicates with the clients to understand what they want out of the system being made. The Product Owner gathers all the requirements from the clients and creates a backlog filled with user stories that the development team can work on to complete the system. For example, when we first met with SNHU Travel, the project manager and I, the Scrum Master, met with the SNHU travel and discussed what was being asked for the system. We asked engaging questions to better understand what was required from the system. SNHU Travel as well contributed their own ideas without hesitation. It was a collaboration for each side to understand what the system is supposed to do and what the system can do. From there we took everything we gathered from that meeting and generated some user stories. User stories are generally a description of a feature for the system. In our SNHU Travel project, one example of a user story was that SNHU Travel want us to develop a top ten list of the highly rated vacation packages. The Product Owner took what he could from the meeting with the client and developed a user story that encompassed everything the feature is supposed to do and the requirements to deem it a successful feature. Once the Product Owner has defined their user stories and created a backlog all of that information is passed down to the development team to begin work. The development team consist of a small team that each individually or collaboratively work on these user stories. The product owner gives the requirements and what the features need to be in order for the feature to be successful but the development team is in full control of how the system is developed. They take the user stories and start working on them, once some user stories are completed they are then sent to the testing team to be tested. Unlike other methodologies, the testing for the features are happening while the development of the system is happening. There is no waiting until the system has been fully completed. This not only helps speed up the process for the project but also encourages change. If the testers do find an issue with one of the features, they can catch it right then and there and let the development team know right away. This way the development team can make changes as soon as they can to avoid any major code refactoring later on in the project. This also helps because the Product Owner continually communicates with the client so they are consistently making changes and grooming the backlog. Therefore new user stories can be added or existing user stories can be modified. Change is can happen very frequently and having the development team and testing team work hand in hand really help with the change. In our SNHU Travel project, there wasn’t much change but we did have to redefine our user stories based on some feedback from a focus group of SNHU Travel customers. They gave us insight on what they would like to see from the system and what changes could be made. From there the product owner redefined some user stories to incorporate those ideas. The testing team also played a role in redefining user stories, since when testing occurred if there were any discrepancies, those were brought up to the Product Owner.

As the last role of Scrum Master, it is my job to facilitate the team and to aid the Product Owner with the grooming of the backlog. I like to think of this role as a bridge between Product Owner and team, but I do want to point out that communication still exists within the team without the Scrum Master. My duty is to make sure that the project is going on pace and that the team is staying focused. Scrum-agile methodology has many scrum events that help keep pace and allows the team to remain focused throughout the development cycle of the system. For example, in our SNHU Travel project, I helped facilitate daily scrum meetings. These meetings were short fifteen minute meetings every work day that allowed the team to discuss what has been done so far and what impediments they had found so far. This allows the team to collaborate and solve issues that are going on so far. As the scrum master, I just make sure this meeting stays on track and make sure that any sidebars are saved for after the meeting is over. The daily scrum meeting may seem short and unnecessary, but one has to remember that communication is key to the agile methodology and this daily meeting encourages that.

Overall the scrum-agile methodology really helped progress the SNHU Travel project smoothly. From a simple first meeting with the client the Product Owner and the Scrum Master created a backlog of user stories for the development team and testing team to start working on. While the development team began their work, the Product Owner still communicated with the client in case there were any features that were missed in the first meeting or if any changes occurred. If they did the backlog would be modified to incorporate those changes. Since the development team and the testing team work simultaneously these changes could easily be applied unlike some other methodologies. The Scrum-agile approach has a lot of advantages compared to other methodologies, but they do have have some downsides. With other methods the level of uncertainty is known and some clients do not want the constant communication, therefore an approach like the Scrum-agile approach would not benefit that project. However, with the SNHU Travel project Scrum-agile approach was the best choice since, there was a lot of uncertainty with the system upfront and since change is encourage in agile methodology, work can be started right away while allowing the client to still come up with changes to their initial features requested. Not to mention the agile methodology proves to be a fast paced method as well, allowing the client access to a preview of there system earlier on than some other methodologies.