Sprint Review and Retrospective

Brock Shinault

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**Scrum-Agile Team Roles and Contributions**

The backbone of the Agile methodology is the Scrum-agile Team. Each member of the team, from the Product Owner to the Tester plays an integral part in ensuring the success of the product and in fulfilling the stakeholder and end user requirements. Without the Scrum-agile team, there would be no apparatus to articulate the user stories, no one to prioritize those stories, no one to turn those stories into reality, and no one to make sure the functions laid out in those stories operate as intended.

The Product Owner for the SNHU Travel project was Christy. She was, for all intents and purposes, the visionary behind the project. She was able to take the customers desires and transform them into actionable tasks. Christy’s primary responsibility is to provide direction to the entire team on what is going to be built. She must also prioritize the work to be done for the project. Beyond this she must also maximize the value of the product and the work of the development team. She did a fantastic job at all of these. During the initial client meeting she was able to get a grasp of what exactly SNHU travel wanted out of their software. She was also smart by including Ron, the Scrum Master, in the meeting so he could get and idea of the scope of the project and what kind of team to assemble to develop it.

As mentioned before, the Scrum Master for this project was Ron. Whereas Christy was the coach of the team, Ron could be considered the team captain. Overall, Ron was responsible for ensuring effective Product Backlog management and helping the Development Team to create high-value products. Beyond this however, Ron was had the responsibility of removing impedances slowing the teams progress and of facilitating Scrum events. During the initial client meeting he was able to get an idea of the scope of the project and assemble a development team. Throughout the project Ron implemented the typical Scrum events such as the Daily Scrum, the Sprint, the Sprint Review, and the Sprint Retrospective.

Perhaps one of the most important roles in the entire team is the developer. For the SNHU Travel project our developer was Nicole. She was responsible for designing and developing the code according to solid software engineering practices. She did this perfectly during weeks three and five. Especially so during week five when the client’s requirements change. She is also responsible for participating in peer reviews and for collaborating with the team to develop iterative code.

Finally, there was Brian, the tester. He was responsible for defining acceptance criteria and tests, for clarifying any ambiguity found in the code and user stories and for executing tests and analyzing results. Finally, he had to collaborate with the team to find and resolve defects within the code. During week four Brian did an excellent job at developing the test cases for the various user stories. This not only gave him an idea of how the code should function, but also helped Nicole develop even more effective code.

**Scrum-Agile Approach to the SDLC**

The Scrum framework is crucial to making the Agile methodology effective. Because of the fast paced and flexible nature of the Agile methodology, a rigid plan is not ideal for implementation in the software development life cycle. The Scrum framework allows for easy prioritization of user stories in the product backlog, rapid implementation and testing of software features, and efficiency when implementing changes to the product.

There are various steps within the Scrum framework and each step is important to the success of the next. The first step in the framework is to take inputs from the customers and other stakeholders. We can see this step at play during the initial client meeting and when Christy, the Product Owner, held a special focus group of some of SNHU’s clientele to determine some of the features they would like to see in the software. The product owner must then prioritize the backlog of user stories, or tasks, for the Scrum Master and Development team to determine the order in which the user stories will be developed. This will be done during the Sprint Planning Meeting and Daily Standup Meetings. Next there is the Sprint. This is a 1 to 4 week timespan in which user stories are developed and tested. During this time, Daily Standups or Scrums occur to determine that day’s tasks, the previous days progress, and to voice what impedances may be occurring within the development team. These Sprints can also be used to make corrections or changes to the product. Finally, the finished work is rolled out and given to the customer.

As said before, the product backlog was developed after Christy collected the user stories and prioritized them for the Development Team. During Sprint Planning and the Daily Scrum, Ron, Nicole, and Brian got together to determine which requirements to focus on for the Sprint and for that day. The Sprint also allowed for Brian to test the code and provide feedback to Nicole.

**Scrum-Agile Approach and Project Completion**

The beautiful thing about the Scrum-agile Framework is that it allows for curveballs and exceptions to arise throughout the Software Development Lifecycle. At one point during the development of the SNHU Travel software the focus of development shifted to the implementation of detox and wellness travel experiences. At first the development team was worried that this sudden change meant they would have to restart the entire development process. Christy ensured them, that because we were implementing the Agile methodology, this simply was not the case. Instead of scrapping all the previous work, she deprioritized the current work and prioritized the implementation of wellness and detox vacations. This not only allowed the team to keep all their work up to that point, but also allowed them to still meet deadlines.

**Communication Tools**

The phrase “communication is key” can sometimes be an overused statement. However, in the case of the Scrum-agile framework, the statement could not be truer. The communication tools I chose to implement were the information radiator, such as a whiteboard, and the daily scrum. The information radiator is a high visibility tool that allows the entire team to view not only their tasks, but also what tasks need to be completed and is a good indicator of the progress of the project. There are other virtual versions of the whiteboard but because we are working in close proximity to each other I felt like this was not necessary. The daily scrum was great for communication because it allowed for the entire team to voice their progress while also getting an idea of what work needed to be done that day. It also gave them a chance to bring up any impedances to their work to Ron, the Scrum Master.

**Organizational Tools**

From a project management perspective there are numerous tools available to the Product Owner and Scrum Master, and even the entire development team that allows them to keep track of progress and visualize what tasks need to be completed. I said above that I did not believe that virtual tools would not be necessary from a communication standpoint because we are all in close proximity to each other. However, I believe the use of an online tool like Jira would be extremely beneficial during the software development lifecycle. Jira would allow Christy to easily organize the product backlog, while also allowing Ron and the Development Team to see what tasks need to be completed and where each task is in the development lifecycle.

**Scrum-Agile Effectiveness**

The Scrum-Agile approach to the SNHU Travel project truly flexed the full capacity of both the Agile methodology and Scrum framework. It allowed Christy, our Product Owner to effectively collect and prioritize requirements and user stories from the people who were going to eventually use the software. This allowed Ron, our Scrum Master, and our Development Team to further prioritize how they were going to accomplish the development of these tasks. The sprints gave the development team and the tester the opportunity to build and field sections of the code and implement changes. It also gave them the flexibility to implement ad hoc changes to the functionality of the software. These advantages can often be a double-edged sword. Because Agile accounts for ad hoc changes and iterative sprints, this can often cause fragmented outputs of the software versus one finalized product. The use of sprints also make Agile difficult to implement during long-term projects. With all these things in mind it is my determination that the Scrum-agile approach was in fact the best approach for the SNHU Travel project.

References

Charles G. Cobb. (2015). *The Project Manager’s Guide to Mastering Agile : Principles and Practices for an Adaptive Approach*. Wiley.