**Sprint Review and Retrospective**

Patrick Johnson – Scrum Master

Southern New Hampshire University

This is a retrospective written by Scrum Master Patrick Johnson in reflection of the most recent project commissioned by client: SNHU Travel. To start, we’ve been met with an epic task from our client SNHU Travel to create a website that helped expand vacation packages to a broader audience, as well as promote vacation deals and the overall creation of a unique booking system within the span of 5 weeks. I will begin this reflection by going over the roles of each of our team members and their contributions to the completion of this project.

For myself, the Scrum Master, I executed the Scrum events and ensured that the Scrum methodology was being followed properly throughout the project. I also helped the Product Owner with utilizing the backlog and ensure the communication between team members was fluid and clear through the concepts of sprint planning and daily scrum meetings. The Product Owner handled the backlog and met with users to create a set of user stories in which the Tester planned out and organized in a priority que, as well as kept in contact with the client and worked with the Scrum Master to ensure there are zero issues with the backlog, as well as being available for e-mail requests by all team members. The Product Owner also met with the management for SNHU Travel to convey requested changes/updates to the team. The Tester works in close contact with the Product Owner, and, as stated, took elements of the user stories and developed initial test cases that ranged from high priority to low priority with levels of importance and created an excel spreadsheet that included what each user story should follow with expected outcomes and pass/fail measures for the developers as per the new guidelines requested by SNHU Travel. The Developer, along with the dev team, took the spreadsheet given by the Tester and implemented the user stories into a slide show format which was at the request of the Product Owner which was a remake of the original plan of a basic website, and instead became a slide show of wellness/detox centers and resorts at the request of SNHU Travel.

In the middle of development of this project, the team was met with three revisions/updates to the initial plan. Luckily, since we are using the agile methodology, we were able to keep our completion dates and meet our deadlines properly without any large hiccups.

As we got started on our work, the Product Owner met with users and took some user stories that helped us get an outside-looking-in in regards to what the user/customer would want to see and use on the product. This required creating a list of user stories that ranged from low priority to high priority and a developed understanding of how their stories could be implemented and specifically what the pass/fail measures were for each story. Not long after, another change came through from the Product Owner in which we were to use a slide show wireframe for the listings and user stories instead of the traditional website format. Going forward in this, we adjusted the stories to suit the usability of the wireframe; overall, throughout the requested changes, we completed the slide show wireframe with the user stories implementation and created a solid final product that would make users overall satisfied with the service and these changes were possible because of agile and its flexibility for change.

Weeks before meeting our deadline we were requested by the client to implement wellness centers and health detox resorts to the vacation package booking system. This was a sudden change and created a small cause of panic as our Developer was worried we would have had to scrap all of the previous work done. Luckily again, agile saved the day and did not require the scrapping of previous content, and all of this was doable due to using the agile methodology, as it allowed us to innovate, refine, and perfect the product without delay and with the ability to go back a step to make changes that were needed. If this were waterfall, we would have been in a tighter situation as we would not be able to go back a phase or implement changes at such a fast rate, and ultimately we were able to meet our deadline regardless of the sudden shift in direction.

Communication was a key component to the success of this project. The daily scrum meetings were crucial to providing insight to the progress of the project, as well as figuring out what obstacles each team member faced each day and understanding their goals for the following work day. There are three questions asked at these meetings: “What did I do yesterday?”, “What will I do today?”, “What obstacles impede our progress?”. These questions were crucial for each member to answer and understand fully where things are in regards to progress and personal responsibility. These questions encourage everyone to be open about what’s on their mind in the context of the project as well as opening the door for communication between each other if one is having difficulty and does not know how to overcome their personal obstacle. The other forms of communication were that of direct e-mails to the Product Owner and in some cases the Tester. These e-mails were requests from the Product Owner for what changes needed to be made, what didn’t need to change, and what guidelines should be followed within the current sprint as well as what tools the team should be using. The e-mails also requested the Tester to be at the ready in regards to helping the development team in understanding which modules were in need of testing and the preparation of reports, and also input on the tools that the team requested or that the Product Owner required for smooth communication and development purposes.

The tools used by the team for development were a code sharing open source development website and program known as GitHub, and in regards to communications they used Telegram for instant communication with one another and Gmail for use in sending e-mails for serious inquiries that needed to be more formal. These tools helped the team be successful as GitHub is a very collaborative tool for developers to make changes in real-time and for the lead developer to accept or reject any changes, and Telegram is an instant chat service in which the team members can communicate everything freely and openly without any delay between one another. In tandem with these tools, the team used various communication practices to succeed in the project; things such as an information radiator and scrum events. With the information radiator, they were able to visually see what needed to be done next in the project. With scrum events, it’s really the foundation for the team’s communication. We go through sprint planning, sprint review, do our daily scrums as was referenced earlier in this retrospective, and this retrospective itself serves as a reflective tool for communication in the context of how we handled the process of this grand project and what we can do going forward into the next.

To conclude this retrospective, the agile methodology saved us in various ways in how quickly and spontaneously the project had changed over the course of its development. If we were stuck with waterfall, we wouldn’t have been able to do the things we’ve done here and it would have been obvious. Agile let us be innovative, flexible, and it let us change things at the last second if needed. The big problem that agile greeted us with earlier in the project was facing a high priority on utilizing the backlog and emphasizing the user story which at times can be difficult if a sudden change is requested, and once the need for the wellness and detox center entered the fray, we had to clear the prioritization of the backlog. All of that said though, it’s much easier to use agile in this project as it allowed us to focus together as a team and work collaboratively with fluid and concise communication methods. It allowed us to make sudden changes when needed and gave us the ability to take a step back and not become overwhelmed by a sudden change in direction; it helped give the team a peace of mind during development, and overall the project was completed and became a huge success for not just the team, but the company as a whole. We will continue to reflect on this process moving forward and we shall greet whatever new challenges come our way; we will be innovative, creative, and always ready to face the next big thing.