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Sprint Review and Retrospective

In this retrospective I want to touch on a few aspects the project. The necessity to be able to look back on a project and dissect what went wrong and what went right is imperative to the iterative development that is Scrum and Agile methodologies. The only way forward is in taking what went wrong, reworking it, and trying again. Failure is not a desired outcome in anything, but with Scrum and Agile methodologies, we can turn that failure into a success.

In the application of each role within Scrum, we can contribute the successes with how each of the team members and different levels of the team interact with each other. The biggest contribution to its success is both in the communication transparency and autonomy that is given at the lowest level in the hierarchy. This allows each role to apply themselves to the fullest, without worry about another stepping over the other. The autonomy guaranteed in the Development Team allows them to play to their strengths while the Scrum Master and Product Owner support them with open lines of communication with the client and their needs in the case of the latter and ensuring the autonomy is kept and proper internal communication is facilitated with the former.

My time in each role solidified these principles. In the Development Team role, it was good to be able to choose what I was going to take accountability for and what I was going to complete in the current iteration. In the Product Owner role, I aimed to ensure each User Story that I created was concise and conveyed what the client was asking for as best as possible to allow the team sufficient information to make their decisions with. Finally, as the Scrum Master, I could see the importance of upholding that autonomy in the Development team not only because I had firsthand experience with it, but because I was able to take into consideration what the team thought about it when setting our principles we would want to uphold.

All of this is in the name of completing the User Stories generated from the client’s needs by the Product owner. This is where the autonomy held in the Development Team is exercised. With the team being able to choose what they want to tackle; they are then able leverage their strengths to complete the task chosen. Each iteration of the project and each task can be handled by a person that is most invested and thus can more readily take accountability of their task.

This translates exceptionally well when the project pivots in a different direction. Since each iteration has a short development cycle, any reversal, change, or otherwise in the project can easily be accounted for. The open communication line through the Product Owner allows the team to know the project needs a change. Each change is communicated directly to the team and they can then stage the next iteration to be completed with the same autonomy as the previous iteration.

When working within Scrum, I found that the short lifecycle kept the work moving. When working on the first iteration of the story, the information that was available on what was desired from the client was communicated well. The input given by our product owner really helped with creating an effective demo for the client to provide feedback on. The very next iteration that was needed came from feedback the client had on the demo provided. With this new feedback, we were able to pivot our direction to suit the new direction of the client. This is one of the strengths of Scrum and Agile methodologies. It is able to iterate a project over short lifecycles and ensure that feedback of the client is incorporated into the next iteration to make a final product that is what the client was after.

With the effective communication done throughout the process, we can see just how imperative it is to the process. Without the communication provided by the client, the iteration that they were giving feedback on would not have been as complete as it ended up. When it came to the team collaboration, we were able to work out and designate our principles that we want to push and uphold. This led to me wanting to uphold the integrity of the autonomy of the team. Within this autonomy came accountability for the tasks that the team chose for themselves. Further, this would lead the team to better communicate what they need to complete their tasks. The cycle of communication would be able to continue within the team and can permeate upwards to the Product Owner and through to the client.

On top of the methodology, the tools available contribute and even make the success of the project. Since communication is one of, if not the most important aspects of the methodology, any tool that facilitates it becomes useful. The tools that we reviewed and used contributed to the success of the project iterations. Even something as simple as the emails we sent ensured that communication was upheld and the necessary components were conveyed without hinderance.

Overall, the Scrum-Agile approach was well suited to SNHU Travel. The ability to pivot when needed and the overall flow and flexibility of the team can be difficult to come by, but very welcome. In personal experiences with other methodologies, I am confident to say that the pros of Scrum-Agile outweigh the cons as it pertains to this project. One of the main drawbacks I can see is if the principles of the methodology is lost in any way, it can become untenable. For instance, if the autonomy of the team is lost and is intruded upon, it can cascade into a problem insurmountable if the principles are not reinforced. However, if the principles hold and are held, this can very well be the best methodology for SNHU Travel and projects beyond.