

R&R&R&R

Rest, Relaxation, Review, Retrospective

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Welcome to the sprint review and retrospective of our amazing SNHU Travel project. First of all, let me introduce you to our all star Scrum Master, the glue that held our team together. He was always on search and destroy for any blockers that might slow us down or prevent us from delivering value to our customers. He also kept us focused on our team values, such as collaboration, transparency, and continuous improvement. He planned and facilitated our scrum events. He also led by example, showing us how to be respectful, supportive, and accountable to each other. He tried to bring out the best in us by encouraging us to share our ideas, feedback, and challenges. He was a much needed mentor for our team due to our inexperience.

Next up, we have our Product Owner, the patron saint of stakeholders and backlog. She was the voice of the product and the customer, making sure we understood what they wanted and needed from our travel app. She defined and prioritized the features and user stories that would deliver the most value to them. She maintained and updated the product backlog, ensuring that it was clear, concise, and aligned with the product vision. She was a great collaborator and negotiator for our team.

Then, we have our Developers, who were the heart and soul of our team. They were the ones who implemented the user stories with impeccable quality and timeliness. They provided realistic work estimates and implementation plans by sizing the stories according to their complexity and effort. They rolled with the punches, adapting to changing requirements along the way. They also aided design decisions, bringing their technical expertise and creativity to the table. They refined and communicated the details of the work being done, making sure everyone was on the same page. I know from experience that implementation is only half the battle, and I think there are more standards we can try next sprint to simplify production support,

documentation, and technical debt concerns, creating a sustainable development cycle for our team.

Finally, shout out to the incredible Testers, who focused on the user's needs and ensured both functional and non-functional requirements were met. They defined acceptance criteria that drove the development and testing work. They wrote and updated test cases to account for changes. Ensuring the quality of this sprints iteration.

Together we broke down the work into small and manageable user stories. Each story had a clear definition of done, acceptance criteria, and estimated effort. We prioritized the stories based on their value and dependencies. We then assigned them to different team members who worked on them independently or collaboratively.

The smaller scope of the sprint compared to the stages of waterfall enabled more detailed and accurate planning which resulted in more accurate work. We also had daily stand-ups where we shared our progress, challenges, and blockers. We helped each other out whenever possible and kept each other accountable.

The participation of stakeholders in this review allows feedback to be gathered much earlier. Course corrections can then be planned, implemented, tested, and reviewed again in a future sprint. This demonstrates the flexibility of agile over the waterfall method. So when the client decided to change the Top Destinations from a list to a slide deck, we did not lose a lot of overhead or drastically mess up dependent plans due to the smaller scope of planning. Rather than having complex documents and communications to update, we only had to modify a few stories. We also used our backlog refinement session to re-prioritize and re-estimate the new

stories. It effectively made the change feel smaller and less impactful, something we could take in stride.

Story management and communication was communicated effortlessly through our use of Jira. We wrote questions and feedback in comments directly attached to each story. This way, we could keep track of the changes made and the conversation around them. For example, I might ask something like “I think this part of the acceptance criteria is too ambiguous, can we refine it to be more specific?” or “After meeting with the client, this story had some changes, does this change the size of the story?” We also used Jira’s information radiator to communicate the status of work by moving the stories through the columns from “In Progress” to “Done”. This helped us all see the progress of the sprint and identify any blockers or dependencies. It also gave everyone the same access live during sprint planning and backlog grooming sessions even if they were not in the office.

Another thing we did was show up on time for the daily scrum. This is important but I also want to point out how important it is to be being detailed and concise in our updates. I think this gives others on the team the best chance to see where they can collaborate or offer help. For example, instead of just saying “I worked on this yesterday. I’m working on it again today”, I would say something like “Yesterday, I finished coding this feature and tested it locally. Today, I’m going to push it to the dev environment and write some documentation. I’m blocked by this bug that I need some help with.” This way, we can all have a clear picture of what everyone is working on and what challenges they are facing.

Finally, we enjoyed using pointing poker as a way to quickly point work during sprint planning and maintain full team participation in the process. I think this helped us reach

consensus on the complexity and effort required for each story and avoid any biases or assumptions. We also added some fun and games to our planning sessions.

As you can see, each role on our team and the Agile methodology played its part in making our SNHU Travel project a success. It allowed the team to deliver working software in short iterations for greater feedback and adaptability to change with less planning overhead. It fostered collaboration and communication among the team members and the stakeholders, which improved the quality and alignment of the product. The only downside I can think of is that it relies heavily on the motivation, collaboration, and involvement between both the team and the customer, the very nature of which is variable and inconsistent. Luckily for us this team and the SNHU Travel Client, this was no issue and the Agile framework was a tremendous advantage. We learned a lot from each other and from this project and are proud of what we've accomplished this sprint.