**Sprint Review and Retrospective**

**SNHU Travel Project**

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**Abstract**

This paper presents a detailed retrospective on the SNHU Travel project, which centered on creating a wellness-themed travel slideshow using Agile-Scrum methodologies. As the Scrum Master, I explore how our small core team—comprising myself as Scrum Master, Antonio as Product Owner, and Franco as Developer—collaborated to meet project goals, adapt to changes, and overcome interruptions despite minimal participation from other team members. This retrospective discusses role contributions, the evolution of user stories, our adaptive process in handling interruptions, effective communication strategies, the organizational tools utilized, and an overall evaluation of the Agile approach for the project.

**Introduction**

The SNHU Travel project was designed to transition our team from a traditional Waterfall method to an Agile-Scrum approach, emphasizing iterative delivery and continuous improvement. Although the project team was significantly reduced—consisting solely of myself, Antonio, and Franco—we adopted Agile practices consistently to maximize transparency, collaboration, and efficiency. This retrospective reflects on the application of specific Scrum roles, the step-by-step completion of user stories, and the methods we employed to manage interruptions. Additionally, it evaluates communication techniques, scrutinizes our organizational tools, and weighs the pros and cons of Agile for this project, ultimately determining whether Scrum-Agile was the best approach for SNHU Travel.

**Applying Roles**

A cornerstone of the project’s success was the clear definition and execution of each Scrum role despite the limited team size:

Scrum Master (Ian Brown):

My role was pivotal in facilitating effective communication and ensuring that our Agile ceremonies ran smoothly. I organized daily stand-ups, sprint planning sessions, and reviews. For example, when the team encountered an unexpected dependency blocking progress—specifically, the integration of new wellness imagery—I quickly organized an impromptu meeting to realign our focus and tackle the blocker. This intervention not only prevented extended downtime but also reinvigorated the team’s momentum.

Product Owner (Antonio):

Antonio maintained the product vision and managed the backlog, ensuring that every user story aligned with our wellness theme. His prioritization helped us focus on high-impact features, such as detailed travel slide transitions that conveyed calming and inspiring messages. By engaging with stakeholders and continually revisiting the product requirements during sprint planning, Antonio ensured that the project met both business needs and user expectations.

Developer (Franco):

Franco’s role as the sole developer entailed hands-on coding, integrating multimedia elements into the slideshow, and troubleshooting technical issues. His dedication in writing efficient Java code and implementing the design changes was critical—especially as he balanced solo coding with continuous integration practices. By rapid prototyping and iterating functionality, Franco’s work was the engine of our incremental product enhancements.

Although other students were assigned to the project, their lack of participation meant that our team had to adapt by distributing the key responsibilities among the three of us. This critical adjustment required strong communication and mutual accountability, proving that even a small, dedicated team can achieve significant outcomes when roles are clearly defined.

**Completing User Stories**

The Agile-Scrum approach was instrumental in exhaustively detailing, refining, and delivering user stories:

Iterative Breakdown:

Breaking down the overall vision into concise user stories allowed us to address specific portions of the travel slideshow incrementally. An example user story was, “As a traveler seeking wellness, I want to view inspiring slides with serene visuals and reflective descriptions so that I feel rejuvenated before planning my trip.” This story guided our objectives, ensuring that each iteration contributed directly to the user’s experience.

Progressive Elaboration:

In early sprints, cell placeholders and rudimentary designs were established. In subsequent iterations, feedback from the sprint review led to the addition of interactive elements and enhanced transition effects between slides. During a sprint meeting, we discussed how to refine the aesthetic quality of the transitions—this input then served as a critical criterion for the following sprint’s acceptance criteria.

Real-Time Feedback:

Regular sprint reviews allowed Antonio and Franco to observe live demonstrations of the updated functionalities. After a sprint review where the initial wellness imagery was displayed, constructive feedback led to modifications. Adjustments such as refining the color palette and font styles were completed within the next sprint, showcasing how Agile facilitated rapid iterations and ensured that every user story reached completion in a collaborative manner.

This structured process not only kept the development aligned with evolving user needs but also fostered a shared understanding among the team about the project’s objectives.

**Handling Interruptions**

No project is immune to interruptions, and the Agile methodology particularly excels when the project direction shifts mid-sprint:

Mid-Sprint Realignment:

During one sprint, we faced a significant interruption when stakeholder feedback called for a pronounced emphasis on mental health benefits—a pivot from the original wellness focus. Antonio promptly re-prioritized the backlog, and I reconvened the team for an urgent backlog grooming session. This meeting led to modified user stories incorporating interactive elements like guided reflections and responsive prompts within the slideshow.

Agile Adaptability:

Even with a limited team, our Agile fundamentals enabled us to reallocate responsibilities without losing sight of our sprint deadlines. Franco immediately adjusted the codebase to incorporate new interactive widgets, while I ensured that revised acceptance criteria were communicated and understood by all. This ability to adapt without derailing the entire sprint was a direct result of our disciplined adherence to agile ceremonies, particularly the sprint review and retrospective sessions.

Minimizing Downtime:

By addressing interruptions in our daily stand-ups, we managed to minimize unplanned downtime. This proactive communication meant that even though the planned features shifted, the project continued to progress through rapid iterations that encapsulated both the original and new priorities.

These approaches underscored the Agile framework’s strength in managing unexpected challenges, thereby ensuring that even as the project direction evolved, the team could continue to deliver value consistently.

**Communication**

Effective communication was crucial to the project’s success, particularly given the small size of our active team:

Daily Stand-Ups:

I facilitated daily stand-ups that were structured to share progress, highlight impediments, and plan daily objectives. For instance, I often sent out concise updates via our Slack channel that read: “Good morning, team! Today, let’s focus on reviewing Franco’s implementation of the new image integration module. Please alert the group if you encounter any blockers.”

This format ensured that every team member was aware of tasks, fostering accountability and a collaborative spirit.

Open Feedback Channels:

To further enhance communication, we maintained an open-door policy during our Agile ceremonies. Antonio’s clear articulation of product requirements and Franco’s proactive discussion of technical challenges were supported by timely responses from my end. This iterative sharing of ideas not only enhanced the quality of our deliverables but also built an environment of trust, where issues were addressed immediately rather than being deferred.

Documentation and Archiving:

All significant communications were documented—ranging from sprint planning decisions to retrospective insights. This archival process provided a reference point that helped us track progress and learn from previous sprints, ensuring that communication remained clear and action items were not lost.

By consistently modeling transparent and direct communication, our team successfully laid a foundation of trust and collaboration, which was especially critical given the small team size and the absence of contributions from other assigned members.

**Organizational Tools and Scrum-Agile Principles**

The combination of organizational tools and adherence to Agile principles served as the backbone of our project management:

Scrum Board:

We utilized a virtual Scrum board to track tasks from “To Do” through “In Progress” to “Done.” This visual representation helped maintain focus and allowed each of us to quickly gauge the overall project status. The board also played a key role during sprint reviews, where reviewed tasks and pending items were clearly visible.

Maven and Eclipse IDE:

Franco’s integration of Maven for dependency management and Eclipse IDE for Java development streamlined our technical processes. These tools ensured that each build was tested continuously, thereby reducing integration issues and enhancing code quality.

Agile Ceremonies:

Regular ceremonies—daily stand-ups, sprint planning, sprint reviews, and retrospectives—provided structured opportunities to reflect on progress, identify impediments, and adjust priorities. For example, during one retrospective session, we identified that clearer user story acceptance criteria would have prevented miscommunication in an early sprint. This lesson was integrated into our following sprint planning meeting, leading to more effective backlog management.

Documentation Tools:

We also leveraged shared document tools to archive meeting notes, decisions, and action items, ensuring that critical knowledge was retained and accessible for future reference.

The effective use of these tools not only enhanced our productivity but also ensured that the Scrum-Agile principles—transparency, inspection, and adaptation—were woven into every phase of the project lifecycle.

**Evaluating the Agile Process**

A critical evaluation of the Agile approach for the SNHU Travel project reveals several strengths and areas for improvement:

Pros:

Iterative Flexibility: The Agile process enabled our small team to rapidly adjust to stakeholder feedback and project interruptions without losing overall direction.

Enhanced Collaboration: With clear roles and daily check-ins, all active members were aligned on project goals, fostering immediate remediation of any issues.

Focused Delivery: By breaking down deliverables into user stories, we ensured that each new feature was purposeful and aligned with user expectations, contributing to a user-centric product.

Cons:

Limited Participation: The project was challenged by the lack of involvement from other assigned team members, placing additional responsibility on the three of us.

Time Constraints: Occasional fixed sprint durations limited our ability to fully polish certain features, resulting in minor quality compromises that needed further refinement in subsequent iterations.

Overall, the Scrum-Agile approach was the best fit for the SNHU Travel project. Its inherent flexibility allowed us to overcome challenges—such as the abrupt change in the wellness focus—even with minimal participation from the larger group. The approach provided a framework that adapted to both planned tasks and unforeseen interruptions, ensuring that the final product met both technological and user-centered objectives.

**Conclusion**

The SNHU Travel project stands as a strong example of how Agile-Scrum methodologies can be effectively applied even in a non-traditional team setup where not all assigned members actively participate. Through the clear delineation of roles—my role as Scrum Master ensuring smooth facilitation, Antonio’s focused prioritization as Product Owner, and Franco’s diligent technical execution—we were able to deliver iterative improvements that enhanced the overall user experience. The strategic use of organizational tools and regular Agile ceremonies further supported our ability to adapt to interruptions and evolving project requirements.

In reflecting on this experience, it is evident that the Scrum-Agile approach not only provided the structure needed for disciplined yet flexible development but also reinforced the importance of clear communication and role clarity, even when team resources are limited. Future projects would benefit from additional team member engagement and potentially adjusted sprint durations to allow for deeper refinement. However, the core lessons learned—about iteration, accountability, and proactive collaboration—will undoubtedly shape our approach in subsequent Agile initiatives.

Additional Considerations:

Looking forward, it would be valuable to explore methods for integrating less-active team members into the Agile cycle, potentially through paired programming or rotating responsibilities. Moreover, incorporating more robust feedback mechanisms—such as user analytics—could further enhance how we tailor user stories to meet evolving requirements.

This retrospective not only documents our journey with the SNHU Travel project but also serves as a strategic blueprint for embracing Agile methodologies in future software development efforts.