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Sprint Retrospective

Throughout this sprint, our team, who had been new to the use of Agile based development methods, has learned a great deal about this different development technique. The members in our team consisted of the Product Owner, Scrum Master, Developer, and Tester.

The Product Owner in our team worked to ensure the value of the product (SNHU Travel) was maximized, and was responsible for maintaining an accurate product that adhered to the customers' requirements. The Scrum Master acted as a coach to the team, adding motivation to their days working on the product. This was done by holding meetings such as Daily Scrum, conducting retrospectives (such as this one), and maintaining Scrum practices with the team. Our team also had a developer and tester. The developer was responsible for making a functional product according to the requirements provided, and the tester made sure the product was tested for quality, bugs, and made dure it met the requirements accurately.

While it may seem easy to think one role was more important, all roles are required and equally important while practicing Scrum. We needed a Product Owner to develop a vision of the product and maintain a backlog. A Scrum Master was needed to work with the Product Owner and other team members to keep everyone on the same track while practicing Scrum, and of course, the developers and testers are needed to actually produce the product.

Scrum was chosen for this project because of the ability to break down this one large project into smaller, more manageable chunks. Our team used Sprints to work through each “chunk”. To do this, user stories were created. These user stories were just what they sounded like: user stories on what they wanted. The customer or end user needed to be interviewed, which provided a great way to develop a list of what we needed to do. These stories were ranked by importance and difficulty and gave us directions on what needed to be done first, such as the user story on displaying the top vacation choices.

Using the Scrum method allowed our team to work through any interruptions such as change requests. The user requested to change the layout of their program from a static page layout to an interactive slideshow. This was easily changed because our team had broken this project into sprints, so we were able to change it without affecting other parts of the project. With a more traditional linear method, we would have created the entire program, only to have to start over again at the end if this change was requested.

Communication is essential when practicing good Scrum. Scrum can only be practiced with excellent team effort, making communication the most essential skill for the team to master. Using user stories to provide some structure to what the team is expected to compete is a good step in the right direction. We also, after mostly completing the project, learned about information radiators. These information radiators are essentially publicly visible boards in a common location (if physical) or a shared program (if digital) that acts as a space for planning ideas. Emails were also used for communication between team members and the customer when clarifying requests. Our team needed to slightly revise the product after learning the customer wanted to focus on health wellness through an email. Without this communication, we would have produced an inaccurate product.

We utilized a product backlog and user stories for organization while developing this product. A product backlog was essential for organization because it acted as a checklist and helped us stay on track by having the important items prioritized at the top. User stories also helped our organization by organizing the customers' requests in a chart that was easy to understand. The customers' requests were broken down into basic bullet points which helped our team develop testing requirements later.

It is said the customer is always right. This means we need to meet or exceed their expectations. I believe the Scrum-Agile based approach was essential for this project in meeting the customers' requests. This was a medium-to-large-sized project with many requests and features. To accurately meet their requirements, we were able to interview the customer, develop user stories, a backlog, and begin working on their project by the most important items first. Along the way, we encountered some necessary changes, which we caught early on due to the Scrum process of sprints as well as communicating with the customer. In our sprint, I do not believe we encountered any issues. This is only possible with a flexible developmental model such as Scrum-Agile. A traditional linear-based method like the waterfall approach would have had our team develop most of the project first, then go back and make changes. These changes could lead to compatibility issues within the structure of the project, leading to delays. The Scrum method we used allowed us to catch any changes before we solidified anything and allowed us to complete the project before the deadline. A linear-based approach may work with some straightforward projects, but with a project like SNHU Travel, which was somewhat broad to start, it was essential to use the Scrum-Agile method to produce an accurate product while meeting the deadline.