Sprint Review & Retrospective

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These past few months have been fun and educational, as we developed a working application for SNHU Travel. Our company ChadaTech has assigned me with the task of leading the final *Sprint Review and Retrospective* of the development with our team. During our time working on this project, I assumed many roles including *Scrum Master*, *Product Owner*, *Developer*, and *Tester*. It has been beneficial to the team as we get to play different roles and see the work through different points of view.

The first role I played on the team was the role of *Scrum Master*. The *Scrum Master* is the team role that is responsible for making sure the team lives agile values and principles and follows the processes and practices that the team agreed they would use. The responsibilities of this role include:

* Clearing obstacles
* Establishing an environment where the team can be effective
* Addressing team dynamics
* Ensuring a good relationship between the team and *Product Owner* as well as others outside the team
* Protecting the team from outside interruptions and distractions

The Scrum Master role does not generally have any actual authority. People filling this role have to lead from a position of influence, often taking a servant-leadership stance. As the *Scrum Master*, my main tasks were to make sure our team was able to effectively work in an agile environment that was free of obstacles or distractions and that our team continued to have a good relationship full of communication with each other. During out meetings, I would ask each team member three basic questions that helped them pass relevant needs amongst the team so that we are all on the same page. The three basic questions I would ask are “What did you do yesterday?”, “What will you do today?”, and “What is impeding your progress?”.

The next role I played on the team was the role of *Product Owner*. The *Product Owner* is accountable for maximizing the value of the product resulting from the work of the *Scrum* team. As *Product Owner*, I was accountable for writing an effective *Product Backlog* which includes:

* Developing and explicitly communicating the product goal
* Creating and clearly communicating *Product Backlog* items
* Managing and ordering the *Product Backlog* items
* Ensuring that the *Product Backlog* is transparent, visible, and understood

I knew that in order for me to succeed as *Product Owner*, the entire team had to respect my decisions that were visible in the content and ordering of the *Product Backlog*. I represented the needs of the *Stakeholders* at SNHU Travel in the *Product Backlog*. The *User Stories* were a helpful asset to the team. They provided our developers and testers with an effective image of what users were looking for in the software. We learned right away that users wanted a more user-friendly experience that was tailored to the type of vacations that interested them. Users also wanted sorting and customization features to be built in.

The next role I got to play was the role of the *Tester*. The role of *Tester* in *Scrum* is basically the role of quality control. It was my job to test and verify software functionality throughout the development cycle. I was able to communicate with the rest of the team and give them vital information that helped them continue to progress with their work and correct any issues that I found in the software. Working with the *User Stories* that the *Product Owner* provided the team helped me create test cases that made my tasks easier to evaluate. Each test case we created was based on a *User Story* as the basic outline. Our team created a set of instructions to follow, based on the *User Stories*. These instructions were helpful while working on the actual tests, as the framework makes it easier to conduct tests and relay relevant feedback to the team. Our Product Owner was efficient at communicating *User Stories* to our team so that I was able to create relevant test cases.

The final role I was assigned during the SNHU Travel project was the role of *Developer*. A *Developer* is a professional that is well-versed in the basic understanding of *Scrum* framework and how to implement it effectively for any software project. *Developers* possess technical knowledge and skills of their core skill that could be software analysis, software programming or coding, UI design, or software testing capabilities. I enjoyed being in the role of *Developer* as I am able to take what other members of the team have put in, such as plans, ideas, features, and fixes and make them a reality. Communication with my team was an absolute necessity as I rely on their input to be able to deliver software that meets expectations.

My communication with the *Product Owner* was crucial as there was a change midway through the project. SNHU Travel had decided to alter the project to meet the wellness and recovery niche market. I was able to effectively make the necessary changes due in part to great team communication and organization. As a *Developer*, my goal isn’t to make perfect code, because of situations like this when changes happen. My goal is to make working code quickly and clean up later once I receive input from *Testers*. This method allows an agile project to change and adapt quickly and still stay on schedule.

I always follow the *Scrum* methodology closely which is structured as a series of *Sprints*. *Sprints* are structured as blocks of time within a project. This usually results in a part of the project being functional by the end of the *Sprint*. Each *Sprint* has five elements to it. *Sprint Planning*, *Standup Meetings*, workday, the *Sprint Review*, and finally the *Sprint Retrospective*. The *Sprint Planning* occurs at the start of the *Sprint*. The whole team decides on what the goals are for that *Sprint* and sets a plan in motion on how the team will achieve those goals at the end of the *Sprint*. The *Standup Meetings* is a short, daily meeting where the team meets and establishes what has been accomplished, how they will achieve the *Sprint* goals for the day, and what obstacles are currently in their way. These meetings are documented on the *Scrum* board which has notes with various tasks pinned to it. Each task is assigned to a team member, and once completed, is moved to the complete section. The *Scrum* board helps the team keep organized and on track of what has been done and what still needs to be done. At the end of the *Sprint*, you have the *Sprint Review* and the *Sprint Retrospective* that cover similar topics. The *Sprint Review* focuses on which goals or tasks have been completed and which have not. The *Sprint Retrospective* focuses on what was done right and what the team could have done better.

Our team followed the *Sprint* methodology during our time working on the SNHU Travel project. The documentation I created as *Scrum Master* outlined the direction for all team members and laid the groundwork for them to learn the methodology. During my time as *Product Owner*, I provided *User Stories* that created a framework for team members to create plans during our *Standup Meetings*, making sure that their work was relevant to SNHU Travels’ requests. As a *Tester*, I made test cases that further built on that framework and created an outline to follow during testing.

When comparing the *Agile* methodology to our old, *Waterfall* method, I believe this project would have been handled a lot differently. The problem with the *Waterfall* method, is it’s not incremental like the *Agile* method. The *Waterfall* method is more sequential, where the project is split up into different stages, unlike the *Agile* method that has smaller, incremental *Sprints*. In *Waterfall*, the method is inflexible, meaning that once the project starts, it is difficult to change direction at any point except in the planning stages. Another issue with *Waterfall* is that all testing occurs towards the end of the project, which means that bugs will probably occur in the final release. In this project, we had some changes that occurred towards the end where SNHU Travel wanted to shift the focus to a recovery and wellness niche market which in *Waterfall*, would have been a problem that could have caused a major delay or even worse, a restart. Since our team was using the *Agile* methodology, the setback was minor.

After taking everything into consideration and experiencing both the *Agile* and *Waterfall* methods, I would firmly choose the *Agile* approach. I prefer a more flexible and incremental approach to the type of business we are in. Being able to complete tasks in increments allows us to catch errors, quickly adapt and make changes, and allows for more creativity. I also prefer *Agile* as it allows for better communication and an overall better environment that involves and empowers all team members. Overall, *Agile* makes use of a number of tools and processes that help team members perform their functions.

As you have read so far, Agile has many useful tools that the team and I utilized. During my role as Scrum Master, I made a Project Charter. The Project Charter was a useful guideline that outlined the processes that would be used throughout our meetings, set the rules for team members to follow, assigned roles to team members, and set the end goal for the project. It was like a blueprint or model for the project that team members followed throughout the course of the project. It laid the groundwork and set expectations for the way our team members communicated with each other and what was expected of them.

I am happy that I was able to take this class. Prior to this class, I wasn’t aware of the way a *Developer* team works. I thought that there was a team of *Developers* that wrote code and that was it. This class was a real eye opener and taught me that *Developers* work as a team and not as one. After playing different roles throughout this class, I would say that I enjoyed all the roles. I enjoyed all aspects from User Stories, the Product Backlog, Project Charter, etc. While the role of *Developer* seems most interesting to me, it would be great to change roles from one project to the next as it would continue to give me a greater point of view of what all the roles are thinking or going through. The *Agile* methodology is one that I would prefer to continue using in the future. The iterative process of getting work done, the amount of communication and team involvement, and the ability to adapt are the main reasons for my decision. In the future, I would like to get better at writing in more detail. The more detail I can communicate to others, the better the overall success the team can achieve.

My overall goal in studying Computer Science is to land a job in either the gaming industry or the up-and-coming blockchain industry. Those two industries were the main reason why I wanted to learn how to code in the first place. I still need to continue to refine my skills, not only in learning more code, but also improving my communication skills as I’ve learned it plays a huge factor in overall success. Learning the *Scrum* methodology has been a joy and I’m glad it’s a requirement in obtaining my degree as prior to this class, I had no idea what it was.

**APA Citation Page**

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