Jonathan Vest

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CS-250 Software Development Lifecycle

7-1 Final Project

The purpose of a Sprint Review and Retrospective is to allow an opportunity to discuss what has been learned during the sprint. This is an opportunity to gather as a team and have an open discussion about things that both did an did not work during the sprint. The sprint retrospective acts in the true spirit of agile as it is in alignment with the three pillars of agile, transparency, inspection, and adaption. During this retrospective we will examine the aspects of the sprint and how the scrum agile approach led to its success and provide examples from each aspect to provide evidence supporting this conclusion.

First, we will examine each role on the Scrum-agile Team and how each role directly contributed to the success of the SNHU Travel project. The Scrum Master is responsible for making sure that the Scrum Team adheres to and understand Scrum theory and is adhering to its practices and rules. During the SNHU Travel project the Scrum Master did this by making sure that the Scrum events such as scrum meetings, backlog refinement, sprint review and retrospective were well planned and laid out during the sprint planning phase and included all parts of the team to ensure everyone was on the same page and dedicated to a common goal moving forward.

According to The Project Managers Guide to Mastering Agile the Product owner is responsible for maximizing the value of the product and the work of the Development Team. During the SNHU Travel project the Product owner achieved this by fulfilling one of the Product Owners primary responsibilities and acting as the intermediary between the Scrum Team and the users of the product. It is the Product Owners job to make certain there is clear communication of the vision and goals of the project. By conducting interviews and developing clear user stories, the rest of the Scrum Team can determine and define requirements to meet the user goals. Not having these clearly defined user stories, requirements, and goals the team can not efficiently move forward with the project and it is likely to cause delays and the need to redo work that has been previously considered complete.

The team role can consist of people with a wide range of skills and while they are all considered members of the Scrum Agile team, and all are considered part of the Development team, they serve different yet parallel purposes. The team is expected to function as a single unit and all members of the team collaborate and work cohesively towards the common goal. During the SNHU Travel project the development team consisted of two major factions, Developers and Testers. The developers were responsible for backlog refinement and for taking the user stores and doing the actual coding to make those stories a reality. The testers were not only responsible for testing aspects of the project as they were considered done but to collaborate with the developers and communicate openly about aspects of the project that were succeeding and those that were not. Working together in this way can help to speed up the development process. The testers are not sitting around waiting to be handed a section of code to test. They are actively working with the developers and can help to deliver a more solid product in a timely fashion.

During the SNHU Travel project the team was ablet to apply the Scrum agile approach to ensure each of the user stories came to completion. For example, one user story was that this certain user wanted to see the top five destinations list. Using the scrum Agile-approach the Product Owner interviewed the user and was able to collect well defined requirements. The user story was then refined and picked up by the Development team for implementation. During the project, the client decided that instead of just wanting to see the top five vacations in the United States they wanted to see the top five detox/wellness vacations. The Product Owner met with the client to gather clear and well-defined requirements on the changes that would need to be implemented. Then a meeting was held with the team to discuss the changes and develop a plan to implement the changes moving forward. The Agile- Scrum approach embraces change and by each member of the team following the rules of Agile, the team accepted the changes, the plan and the team adapted, and the product was delivered on time.

Communication is critical if an Agile project is going to succeed. In order to have transparency you must have open communication both within the team and with the client and users. After changes had been requested by the client during the SNHU Travel project, open communication was achieved between development team members and the product owner via email. Development team members sent follow up emails to the Product Owner and testers to achieve clarity on what changes needed to occur and what the client expected from the product as a result. Having this communication allowed for transparency during the change and allowed the team to adapt to the client’s expectations instead of attempting to guess at what they thought the client would want.

The Scrum Agile tools and principles that aided in the success of the SNHU Travel project were transparency, open communication, and adaptation. Transparency and open communication were achieved using daily standup meetings and Agile and Kanban boards. These tools allowed the entire team to see the progress of the project and individual team members as well as being able to see what goals needed to be achieved and any changes to the process in near real time.

Taking an adaptive approach with the Agile Scrum process was the correct approach for this project. It allowed for a certain bit of uncertainty and enabled the team to adapt and overcome the changes that were requested by the client along the way. If the team had instead taken a traditional more strictly implemented waterfall approach such changes would have possibly slowed if not completely stalled the progress of the project. The adaptative approach of Agile-Scrum not only allows for unexpected changes but embraces them. Being open and communicating with the team allows the flexibility to adapt to the changes in requirements.

There are indeed downfalls to such an approach that must be considered as well. It is not always possible to disclose the cost of the project upfront. While the Agile-Scrum approach has the benefit of an accelerated start since there is not extra time and resources being spent on product requirements, this has the drawback of not being able to determine the cost of the project up front. As requirements change, so does the cost. Making sure you are open with the client not only at the start but communicating with them during the entire project will help alleviate any unease this may cause the client. Overall, for a project such as this the benefits of the Agile scrum approach outweigh the concerns and the correct decision was made.

References

Charles G. Cobb. (2015). The Project Manager’s Guide to Mastering Agile : Principles and Practices for an Adaptive Approach. Wiley.