**Sprint Review and Retrospective:**

Every team member had an important roll to play to ensure the success of the SNHU Travel project and it all starts with the product owner. The product owner “provides direction for the team, on what will be built and prioritizes the work to be done” (Cobb, page 35). The product owner communicated with the client, customers, and team members to make sure everyone had the same vison for an end goal. It is their job to ensure that the first principle of agile, to “satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software” is met (Beck et al., 2001). During the first meeting for the SNHU travel project, the client was very vague as to what they were hoping to accomplish but they had a general idea, and the customers gave feedback as to what they would like to see. Next the product owner created product backlog to help the development team know what was expected from them. While exploring the product owner role, I made the mistake of focusing too much on what the customer wished, assuming that the client wanted the same thing, but the client ended up wanting to take on a simpler project than the customers described. The product owner did follow up communication with the client as the project progressed to gain more clarity at each step which led to everyone being on the same page for the final product.

Once the team had a direction, as scrum master it was my job to connect with the product owner and team to “ensure Scrum was understood and enacted” (Cobb, page 36). The scrum master is responsible for making sure the twelfth principle from the agile manifesto is implemented. “At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly” (Beck, et al., 2001). To keep the team organized and on task the scrum master facilitates daily standup meetings to get an understanding of what the team had accomplished, what they wished to accomplish, and what obstacles stood in their way. Taking on the role of Scrum Master, I found it wasn’t always easy to get team members to voice their feelings and opinions, especially when communication couldn’t be done face-to-face, so it was my job to encourage each team member to speak up and share their thoughts. Face-to-face communication is always more effective but not always possible to do remote worker circumstances. When a message board was used, some of the team member chose not to actively participate. Once the team was able to communicate their desires and needs, it was then my goal as the scrum master to eliminate obstacles that stood in their way so that they would be successful. An example of an obstacle that had to be eliminated might include when needing the office space rearranged because the location of the workstation was proving to be too cold to focus during the winter so as Scrum Master, I move the work station into a warmer room. Another obstacle was needing a break from screen time so as Scrum Master, I ordered a hard copy of the textbook which ended up being helpful when it came to finding quick references for projects. These seem like irrelevant or little things but they made a big difference that helped the team be successful.

With an understanding to how operate under the agile methodology, thanks to the scrum master, the team worked with the backlog or user stories provided by the Product owner to create sprint goals. Sprints are “The heart of the Scrum process” and are a “fixed-length-time-box” in which the developers and testers break the backlog up into smaller projects to accomplish (Cobb, 40). To assist in communication amongst the entire team, the use of a sprint board helps the developers see their progress and goals for each sprint. Using an information radiator such as Microsoft Azure digitalizes the sprint board so that it is easily accessible by all and it creates transparency as to what everyone needs and expects from one another. Once the sprint goals were set, the developers took the user stories and were allowed to let their creativity flow to build the customer their desired product. Allowing the developers to set sprint goals and have creative freedom is in align with the eleventh principle of agile which states that “the best architecture, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams” (Beck, et al., 2001). In return for this freedom, it is then the developer’s job to fulfill the third principle and “deliver working software frequently” and the ninth principle to pay “continuous attention to technical excellence” (Beck, et al., 2001).

When the developer feels they have a viable product during their sprint, they then pass it to the tester to make sure it met the user story requirements. The testing is done concurrently with development and is “integrated in each sprint in a very collaborative process where testers and developers take joint responsibility for the quality of the product that they produce” (Cobb, page 80). Using test cases, the tester checked to make sure the final product functioned correctly, and no important details were left out. “Working software is the primary measure of progress” and the seventh agile principle (Beck, et al., 2001). The goal of each sprint is for the developer and tester to agree that the product produced in each sprint is “done”. During the SNHU travel project, initially building test cases proved difficult to the client being very vague in regards to their vision. During the development of test cases, it proved necessary to reach out to the client to get more details and clarify what they were hoping for the team to accomplish. An email had to be written to the client to not so subtly tell them that their lack of communication for their vision was holding the team up. It included a follow up list of questions and a suggestion for face-to-face communication.

Giving the client a little push, was effective and finally gave the team a clearer picture as to what was the end goal for the product but it changed the direction of the project. My team was focused on a top adventure vacation but the client then decided they wanted a detox vacation theme. The developers embraced the second agile principle and “welcomed changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer’s competitive advantage” (Beck, et al., 2021). The developer made edits to stay in alignment with the customer’s vision and then cycled it back to the tester to run edited test cases that matched the new requirements. This cycle would continue to circle until the customers vision was fulfilled and the final product was considered “done” by all. A happy customer means success for the team.

I can now look back and reflect and the agile process and I believe it was the correct choice for the SNHU travel project. Being new to the agile approach, it was challenging creating backlog from the initial meeting with the client and breaking it down into user stories but if the waterfall approach was used then my team would have delivered a product that didn’t meet the clients end vision. To change the top 5 destination theme, it would have required starting over from scratch costing both time and money. The clients lack of detail initially could be worked around with the agile approach. My team could adapt to the changes the client presented when the project was already near completion. Perhaps the client would have felt more obliged to have a clearer vision before starting the project if the waterfall approach was used and it would have saved the team some extra rework but it also would have eliminated the developer’s creative freedom and flexibility so the client would have received a project had less passion poured into it.

**References:**

Beck, K., Beedle, M., Van Bennekum, A., Cockburn, A., Cunningham, W., Fowler, M., Martin,

R., Mellor, S., Thomas, D., Grenning, J., Highsmith, J., Hunt, A., Jeffries, R., Kern, J.,

Marick, B., Schwaber, K., Suherland, J., (2001-2019). *The Agile Manifesto: The 12 Principles of Agile*. Agile Alliance.

Cobb, C. (2015) *The Project Manager’s Guide to Mastering Agile: Principles and Practices for*

*an Adaptive Approach.* Wiley.