Joshua Asari

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Final Sprint Review and Retrospective

During our work on the SNHU Travel project, many members on the team took part in critical roles on our Scrum-agile Team that greatly contributed to the success of the project. Apart from myself, as the Scrum Master which I will talk more about later, the other roles that helped were the Product Owner, Tester, and Developer. These roles all are intertwined in some way due to how agile works, and both worked collaboratively as well as independently to fulfill their role’s responsibilities.

To start off, I will discuss how my role as the Scrum Master helped contribute to the success of the SNHU Travel project. First of all, I lead many of the Scrum events such as the daily scrum meetings, the sprint planning, and the sprint review / retrospective. These scrum events help make agile what it is known for, which is being a flexible methodology with transparency. The daily scrum meetings are essential for this as it allows for all team members to start collaborating right away in the morning, and gets us to talk about our successes as well as any problems we may encounter. It helps us have a heads up, which may help avoid any problems later on. Sprint planning in conjunction with sprint review / retrospective allows us to have a clear goal, and also to think back about it and talk about if there were no problems / improvements to be had during our sprint. Going back to the SNHU travel project, we excellently changed our focus from types of vacations to detox/wellness and it still fit in within our sprint since we managed our product backlog well. This change in direction was only possible because of the clear communication between the team members, and allowed us to know everyone’s questions and worries and address them accordingly. The Product Owner had scheduled a meeting with the Scrum Master, developer and Tester, and it led to her decision to deprioritize other stories in the Product Backlog so that we can focus on the new product.

Next the Product Owner helped tremendously during the success of the SNHU Travel project. As I mentioned above, the Product Owner helped in creating a new direction for the product to focus on detox/wellness vacation types. This change in direction was only completed because she fulfilled her job by prioritizing needs, engaging with users, and creating user stories. She was able to recognize the new needs of the end user by not only talking with the users themselves, but by also having meetings with the stakeholders. This allowed her to ultimately have that meeting with the Scrum Team to change the direction. The Product Owner also works closely with the tester as she creates the user stories for the Tester to use to help create his test cases. By having meetings with the end user, she was able to generate user stories which are stories that outline what the end user needs are in the product, which helps in creating test cases for the product.

What test cases are helpful for is that it provides clear objective goals that a product should achieve that satisfies its end user. For example, for the SNHU Travel Project, one test case may be about how the website displays the top 5 detox/wellness vacations. Within the test case, it would list the description, as well as any specific elements that the user should see and expect to happen, which in this case would be seeing a list of vacations that has a description, picture and a clickable link to the vacation site. Thus, the Testers helped contribute to the success of the SNHU Travel Project.

Lastly, the Developer had a part in contributing to the success of the SNHU Travel Project. The Developer ultimately is the one who is developing the product and creating it, which of course plays a huge part in the success of the project. Other responsibilities that the Developer has though is that they have to understand the business requirements specified by the Product Owner. The reason this is important is that they also have to estimate the user stories in the sprint backlog.

After talking about how the various roles on our Scrum-agile Team helped tremendously on the SNHU Travel project, our success came from our decision to have a Scrum-agile approach instead of a waterfall approach. For example, the Scrum-agile approach to the SDLC helped each of the user stories come to completion. The reasoning behind this is that unlike the Waterfall SDLC, Agile’s development is iterative which comes in short sprints compared to the sequential development process in pre-defined phases of the Waterfall methodology. This one key element of difference between the two allowed us to help change our direction of the product, whereas if we had the Waterfall approach, it would have been much more difficult. This increase in flexibility and adaptiveness is why development requirements in an Agile project is actually expected, whereas within a Waterfall approach, the requirements and scope are definitive once agreed upon. The reason why Agile is so flexible is because the SDLC phases overlap and begin early in the SDLC. Going back to the SNHU Travel Project, it helped each of the user stories come to completion as although some were completed prior to the change in direction, because of the flexibility of Agile, generating new user stories based on the new requirements was not a problem.

All of these Scrum events are a lot for one person to take in, which is why there are organizational tools that helped our team to be successful. One excellent organization tool that was critical to our success was the JIRA software. The Jira software is built for every member within the Scrum Team to help plan, track and release great software. For example, after creating the scrum project within the Jira software, we were able to create work items like user stories, tasks and bugs on the backlog within the software. Also, the Jira software helped us create the sprint and is also where we held our sprint planning meeting. After starting the sprint within JIRA , we used JIRA to help guide our daily scrums as well. JIRA is also used for helping guide the sprint review / retrospective as well. It is just a great tool that helped our team to be more organized and to stay on track.

Our team also had some Scrum-agile principles that helped our team to be successful. One of the principles that we followed is, “Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software”. Adhering to this principle is why an Agile approach allows you to be so flexible. By always making sure that you are satisfying the customer’s needs even when they change is critical in any company’s success. We were able to achieve that by listening to the customer, updating our priorities in the product backlog. Generating new user stories as well as test cases for the change in direction, and ultimately satisfying the customer by following this principle and being flexible.

Throughout this Sprint Review / Retrospective, I had talked only about the pros that the Scrum-agile approach presented during the project, but not any of the cons. Although the most common disadvantages of this approach were not present during this current sprint, I will discuss them to have a heads up for future sprints. One disadvantage of Scrum is that it often leads to scope creep, which we handled well by having well-defined user stories. Adopting the Scrum framework in large teams is difficult, but our team was on the smaller side and had no problem in adopting the Scrum-agile approach. Daily meetings may frustrate team members, but I had no complaints so far from any team members about them. In conclusion, the Scrum-agile approach was the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project as it allowed us to create a quality product for the ever changing needs of the end user.