Sprint Review and Retrospective

CS-250

Jacob Silberstein

Throughout the entirety of the project, the team worked very hard collaboratively and individually to ensure that the project met not only the standards of ourselves, but also that of our stakeholders. Starting from the leadership in the project, the Product owner was instrumental in outlining and adjusting the backlog hierarchy as well as updating it to meet the standards of the stakeholders. The product owner was hard at work each week in this project adjusting the expected parameters and ensuring that the team stay on time to meet the expected deadlines. Similar in weight, the Scrum master was hard at work on this project as well. Week after week, the scrum master was dynamic in the implementation and actualization of the agile framework within SNHU Travel. Not only did the scrum master constantly work to enforce the framework so it becomes second hand to the staff, but they also worked to facilitate the online space for collaboration and the morning meetings to keep the team focused and productive. The last group in our team that needs to be talked about is our development team. They have put in a large amount of work to ensure a project that is exceptional. From coding to testing, to bug-fixing, the development team has been on fire with maintaining an aggressive schedule while ensuring a high-quality product. It goes without saying, but the project would not have been so successful and adaptable without such a comprehensive and admirably adamant team.

The Scrum approach was incredibly useful in changing the mindset of how to approach the user stories in this project. As opposed to the waterfall method where we would have initially been given a level of detail regarding the quality, detail, and specifications of the project and told to just “go,” there was a higher level of clarity, coordination, and communication between the projects intended recipients and the team as a whole. It was very convenient and effective to work concurrently with the stakeholders and the dev team to identify specifications based on the user stories as the updated frequently based on what the stakeholders noticed, liked, and disliked at given points. Overall, the approach was very useful for creating and implementing a project where work was being done on the project at the same time it was being identified and specified. This was the true benefit of the Scrum approach with causing the user stories to be actualized.

Change is an important part of the Agile framework, and as such is inevitable during a project. The very nature of agile and scrum is to have a sort of ecosystem for communication, so the project is worked efficiently and to the standard of the customer. In such, during times of change in this project, much like any other, the team reevaluated current backlog items and reprioritized to meet the new and updated standards. Essentially, throughout the process, the team new as much as they needed to know to work on their respective part of the project, and in doing so, created an atmosphere of trust in that the leadership would coordinate and work with the team during sprints to ensure appropriate work was done in a stretch of time. For example, during the current project, there was a paradigm shift in the style of vacation that was being requested, as well as a request for additional work with potential future compatibility for an app. The new information was taken in by the Product owner and then conveyed to the team, including the scrum master, as an updated backlog for the next sprint allocation. All in all, this merely caused the team to adjust certain levels of work to try to adjust to more work within a set amount of time so they could add in those revisions for the next set of updates. During this time, the morning meetings helped to facilitate and check each team’s progress against the backlog.

Collaboration in this context was key to a conducive work environment, and as such was incredibly important to making the agile approach metamorphosis easier for the team. In terms of how we communicated, the team initially met every morning through our daily morning meetings, of which we would ideally take up approximately thirty minutes to an hour of the teams’ time. This time was used for updating the team as to everyone’s progress to maintain a healthy level of competition as well as to be able to update our stakeholders as well. We also used the aforementioned time as a tool for the team to air any potential concerns they have as well as allow them to troubleshoot with other teams also involved. Aside from our morning meetings, we also used an online platform called JIRA software to monitor and communicate in an online message board style of system. This communication method allowed for a level of transparency across the team and stakeholders that is often unparalleled when compared to traditional waterfall style projects. This software allowed the team to have real time updates and ascertain real time answers as opposed to having to wait for morning meetings. Overall, the communication used in the agile approach here allowed for a healthy atmosphere of team-based competition where teams could also reach out to one another with questions and help requests, while also allowing all effected members of every team to constantly see where each team is in their progression. Below this sentence is an example of a communication I had with our team as the product owner. I utilized the communication as a chance to show my availability as well as try to communicate my intent for collaboration and transparency between every team and the stakeholders.

“Hey team!

My name is Jacob, but I also go by Jake, and I will be taking on the role of product owner for this project. I am very excited to meet you all and to start our shift over to a scrum framework from our traditional waterfall method! Although the company is over ten years old already, I am a firm believer that it is never okay to stay stagnant. That being said, I believe a scrum framework will be our next best companywide evolution. As the product owner, I will be communicating with the Scrum master and stakeholders along every step of the way to have a large degree of transparency on where we are with the project, as well as what items the stakeholders and customers are looking for us to be putting in to our project. I would like to be the primary point of contact on implementing a constantly updated list of backlog requirements and time frames for our stakeholders. Aside from that, as I said before, I am very excited to start this metamorphosis with you all, and I look forward to hearing about your excitement with our new SCRUM direction!

Jacob Silberstein”

As previously mentioned, the team used JIRA software as a form of communication in real time, but what is so incredible about this platform is the fact that it has multiple functions within the scrum. This platform was our primary tool due to its nature in being so multi-talented. The platform did everything from showing and adjusting timelines to the team, to helping adjust backlog information for easier accessibility and time realization, to showing length and commitments on sprints. The platform tracked each teams points and adjusted to projected timelines based on previous work. Overall, the JIRA platform was critical in the organization and communication of the team, and was pivotal in maintaining a level of transparency amongst all.

All in all, the scrum/Agile approach is one that the company may use in the future as an effective approach for collaboration, transparency, and high-level products. The approach is a great way to go about projects due to its ever-adaptive nature, causing it to be seen as a very high-level product. Where Agile/Scrum may have a short-coming in comparison to the waterfall methodology, is in its time usage. The Agile approach and Waterfall methodology are two correct methods of project management with neither being absolutely wrong. Where the two differ and shine separately will come in the style of the project at hand and how it needs to be approached. For a smaller, simpler, project, a waterfall methodology might be more time efficient, given the lack of necessary updates and modifications. In the case of SNHU Travel, and due to the ever changing nature of travel as a whole, I believe that the Agile approach will indefinitely be the correct one for this project, as travel styles, destinations, and many other attributes change constantly with need for readily available and rapid update to match.

Citations

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