**Sprint Review and Retrospective**

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**Software Development Lifecycle**

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Let me begin by stating that this experiment for a transition from a waterfall to agile method has been a success in my opinion. We were able to work more collaboratively together and communicate more often to get a great product for our client. The following information will discuss what we did and how we did it to review and look back on this project so we can grow as a team moving forward into the next project.

Our scrum-agile team was able to be successful with the help of every member of this team including the product owner, scrum master, developers, and testers. Everyone helped create an environment that put us in a position to create a great product. It all started with the product owner in the initial client meeting. The product owner was able to speak with the client to get an idea of what they were looking for in this product. After this initial meeting, the product owner was able to get some of SNHU Travel’s customers together to discuss what they would like to see in the expansion of the online presence in a focus group. By having a group setting like this, the product owner was able to create open communication amongst the group to bounce ideas off each other to paint a clearer picture for our team of what things we need to implement within this expansion. The scrum master was able to keep the team organized and focused on meeting the expectation that was set for the client with quality and time. The scrum master’s main responsibility is to be a coach, which simply means teach and encourage, help when needed, and let the team work together to figure out the rest. The developers and testers did an excellent job of working together to change the program to create the product that our product owner described to us from the focus group meeting. By communicating with each other and checking each other’s work, developers and testers created this product based on the conversations with the product owner and the client.

The transition from waterfall to scrum-agile was largely successful because of the ability to create user stories. A user story creates a piece of the final product breaking it up into sections to easily see the overall workload for the team. A user story asks us, “As a <type of user>, I want to <perform some task> so that I can <achieve some goal>.” As a team, we were able to successfully create and organize these user stories into an order based on size and priority. The user stories were able to give us more flexibility with the tasks at hand by breaking things down into smaller sections instead of just taking an idea and running with it from beginning to end. We then added each user story into our product backlog, so we could visually see what we still need to work on and what has been completed. The product backlog and user stories are all created in the sprint planning meeting. A sprint is a 2–4-week span of time where a goal is set for a certain amount of a project to be completed. The sprint planning meeting gets each member of the team on the same page with the goal we are attempting to achieve and what will be expected out of everyone. For example, one of the user stories on our product backlog was “As a membership user, I want to click a link that shows me a personalized list of top travel packages that match my previous trips.” As a team, we were able to create the pieces for this part of the program and test it to make sure it worked properly. I will speak further about this in the next paragraph, but when a change to this user story came into the picture, we were able to easily adapt and make the necessary changes to meet the client’s needs. This method gives us the ability to be flexible and make changes to the product when needed based on the needs of the client or functionality of the product.

Halfway through our project, the product owner sent us an email stating that there were some changes that needed to be made with the product. We were taking a list of top 5 destinations and turning that into a slide show of the top 5 wellness and detox destinations. With the agile method in place, we were able to take the user stories that were created for that part of the product and revise them to reach the new goal referred to by the product owner. The example I used in the paragraph before gives us a user story that was revised and needed to be updated based on the client needs. Even though the work had already been completed for that portion of the project, it was brought back into the product backlog, revised the program, and returned to a completed designation. If we were still running the waterfall method, trying to make a change like this would not have been implemented until the maintenance phase at the end of the creation of the product. That would not have met our client’s expectation or deadline for having the completed product that they want. The agile method made making these changes for the client much easier to implement with the flexibility of this concept.

Communication is one of, if not, the most important parts of having a successful team. As the scrum master, I created daily scrum meetings where the group focused on discussing the user stories that are in progress, halted, or completed. These short meetings encouraged the team to work together through possible issues with the product. We were able to have the testers working with the developers on certain stories to make sure that it worked properly the first time. Instead of spending too much time on one story in particular, these morning discussions gave our team the opportunity to make time to work together on certain tasks to complete them sooner to stay within our given timeline. This level of open communication with the group builds accountability and further develops the team.

The organizational tools that helped us be successful was affinity estimation. Affinity estimation helps new agile teams with estimating product backlog items. We were able to use this to collaborate on certain parts of the project. Working together as a developer and tester gives our team the ability to learn from one another and come up with solutions to any issues or changes quicker than if working separately. Something I have always been taught growing up and working with a team is the acronym A.C.E, which stands for attitude, commitment, and effort. These three things are personal qualities that you can control daily. When it comes to collaboration, checking your A.C.E before you get into your group can alter your entire experience and make it extremely productive. I think our team was able to achieve this throughout our project. One principle of scrum-agile is satisfying the customer by meeting their expectations and delivering a perfect product by the date that they need it. Keeping the customers’ needs first is one of the priorities within this method that makes it work so well. An example of keeping the customer’s needs first is when they needed a change to the design of the product, we were able to accommodate the change and make the design fit their needs. Having the ability to do that while a project is in progress makes meeting the client’s needs significantly easier to adapt to those changes, which is one reason that the agile method works so well.

Without the scrum-agile approach for this project, the project would have taken much longer to complete, and we would have probably run into many more problems. The scrum-agile method creates so much flexibility within the group that you can work around or adapt to just about any situation that comes up. It creates the opportunity for more teamwork, which in my opinion creates a better overall product. For the scrum-agile method to work properly though, you must have transparent communication between the team. I don’t see communication as an issue, but it could be a reason that the team is not as successful as they could be beginning with the initial meeting with the product owner and client. The scrum-agile method relies on communication from beginning to end giving the team the right idea of what it is that they are creating and any changes that need to be made to the plan. Overall, I believe that the scrum-agile method was the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project.