CS250 Sprint Review and Retrospective

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CS250 Sprint Review and Retrospective

# A. Demonstrate how the various roles on your Scrum-agile Team specifically contributed to the success of the SNHU Travel project.

# Having an effective product owner, Christy, was paramount to ensuring the success of the SNHU travel project. Her engagements with end users ensured that the product included the top travel destinations, which was found to be very important to end users through her meetings with users. This speaks to the heart of what Agile represents by valuing collaborations and interactions and being adaptable and flexible to the planning and delivery of a product.

The scrum master did an excellent job of leading the sprint planning meetings. He worked with the product owner prior to the sprint planning to ensure they were on the same page as far as what the business wanted versus how things might reasonably get implemented. The sprint planning meetings were crucial to set reasonable sizing estimates with input and collaboration from the team. Additionally, the daily scrum meetings were led by the scrum master who was able to assist with issues that came up. The daily scrum meetings facilitated the team to work in a self-organizing and cross-functional manner.

The Developers were empowered and motivated because communication with the product owner, scrum master, and fellow developers were encouraged. This reduces the chances that the developer can get stuck on an issue whether it is technical and can be quickly figured out through storming the issue with fellow developers, or something that is more of a business impediment that can be identified in daily scrum meetings and resolved with help from the scrum master and the product owner.

By including the tester in each of the tasks and stories, it allowed for quicker realizations of short fallings and easier adjustments. In the waterfall approach testing is typically done at the end and a small bug fix can have large implications on the overall functionality of the product as features become more intertwined. It should be noted that Scrum recognizes only three distinct roles (AKA accountabilities): product owner, scrum master, and developer. (Sims, 2012), in this sense the tester is synonymous with a developer.

# B. Describe how a Scrum-agile approach to the SDLC helped each of the user stories come to completion.

By having the product owner create the user stories, the tasks at hand were framed up with the customer in mind and centered around who would be the end user of the feature and why the feature is needed. This lends itself to much less biased development where the testing of the features can happen more organically in a behavior driven manner. User stories are also written in a way that empowers developers to innovate and use their judgement for how to be implement the desired functionality which they can create through tasks.

# C. Describe how a Scrum-agile approach supported project completion when the project was interrupted and changed direction.

The feature for listing the top travel destinations changed course and was updated to be set up in a scrolling manner with a new angle on the niche market goal with detox related travel offerings. By making small incremental changes, we were able to adjust the top travel functionality to be scrolling without much extra effort. Had this been done in a more waterfall approach with many changes needing to be made all at once it would be much more difficult to adjust the application in a reasonable amount of time.

# D. Demonstrate your ability to communicate effectively with your team by providing samples of your communication.

An example of effective communication within the team occurred when the change in direction for adding detox related packages and the slider for the top travel destinations were introduced. The developer on the team reached out to the product owner, Christy, for clarification on expectations related to what is considered a detox package. This is a good example part of the Agile Manifesto, Customer collaboration over contract negotiation. (Beck 2001a). See below:

**Example Email Exchange**

To: Christy

Subject: Detox Vacation Development

Hello Christy,

To help ensure we are developing what is expected for the SNHU travel site detox packages can you please clarify what criteria a travel package needs to follow to be considered a detox package? Also, should listings that are classified as detox packages only be shown as detox packages. In other words, do we need to ensure that a package should not be duplicated as a detox and a regular package?

Thank you,

-Karl

To: Karl

Reply Subject: Detox Vacation Development

Hi Karl,

The criteria for a detox package should be that must include one of the following attributes:

1. Spa
2. Natural or organic types of food and beverage, dietary detox
3. Yoga, tai-chi, or other spiritual and meditative focused activities
4. Mental health

These aspects of the vacation package should be one of the main attributes and included in either the title of the package or in its main description. If anything related to the list of attributes are just listed as a side note buried in the post and is not a front and center part of the vacation post it should not be considered a detox vacation package.

Also, the vacation packages right now are only going to be classified as either detox or essentially non-detox so the packages listed as detox should only be listed as detox and not be shown outside of the detox listings.

In the future we may choose to expand the categories around the packages which could in theory have some overlap between groups but let’s not worry about that for now.

As we roll out this new feature for detox packages, let’s make sure that we’re testing to make sure the detox packages aren’t ever showing as regular packages as well.

Thanks!

-Christy

# E. Evaluate the organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles that helped your team be successful.

# 

# The project management tool Jira is an intuitive and commonly used project management application. The application allows developers to see what is on the board for the current sprint, backlog, and epic stories and tasks across different teams. By using a tool like Jira as an information radiator, there is traceability to the communications around a development task that can be seen by others, so context is not lost from crucial information being exchanged in emails or other mediums that aren’t auditable and manageable. The draw backs for using such a tool include the fact that users will have to learn how to use it and that the system will need to be deployed and managed, at least from an administrative perspective if in the cloud, otherwise from a IT infrastructure side as well. Additionally, the tool will need to be configured and the business integrations and development workflows will have to be modified in order to conform to what the tool’s capabilities. Additionally, having an Agile Team Charter, especially on a project-by-project basis, helps clarify the big picture of the project like it’s vision and mission as well as who will all be involved including stakeholders. The Team Charter also lays the foundation for how communication will be conducted through the team. One component of the charter sets rules for how the team will communicate and typically will describe the scrum format. This is typically done in a daily scrum stand up where 3 questions are asked. 1) What did I do yesterday. 2) What will I do today. 3) What obstacles am I facing. The characteristics of the team charter and scrum rules/daily scrum are excellently described by the Agile Principle “*Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.”* (Beck 2001b) The team charter can be a document that is available to the team through something like a Google Document. Test cases can be built into the software itself through unit tests, these tests can also be incorporated into build processes with tools like Git and Jenkins for CICD to ensure a new feature doesn’t accidentally break some core functionality.

# F. Assess the effectiveness of the Scrum-agile approach for the SNHU Travel project.

## Describe the pros and cons that the Scrum-agile approach presented during the project.

Pros

By welcoming changing requirements, working in an integrated manner between the business and developers, and welcoming face-to-face communication the team was able to build a product that fit the needs of the end users while also further concentrating the beginning core concept of offer niche travel packages. Throughout these engagements, it was determined part of the way through the development that the niche packages should revolve around detox packages. Additionally, there were some technical usability updates that were changed part of the way through the process. Also, by iterating over 2-week sprints we can ensure that the product is in a consistent state of ready to deploy. This in turn makes deployments a business decision instead of a technical one. The features of these 2-weeks sprints are naturally more manageable and predictable than trying to change an entire system with copious feature changes all at once. (Martin , 2019). These characteristics of the process are core principles to the Agile development process.

1. Changing Requirements.

*“Welcome changing requirements, even late in development. Agile processes harness change for the customer's competitive advantage.”* (Beck, 2001b)

1. Collaboration

*“Business people and developers must work together daily throughout the project.”* (Beck, 2001b)

1. Communication

*“The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.”* (Beck, 2001b)

Cons

While it is undoubtedly a good thing to ensure that the product is usable, one of the key risks to the project was that the site needed to be launched within a tight window because travel is higher during certain parts of the year. By delaying the launch of the application after this window of opportunity, a huge amount of potential revenue could be lost and derail the long term viability of the company.

1. Application Architecture (Cobb, 2015)

One of the key risks of this project were in potentially missing out on the ideal window when people are traveling most often during the year. By having a poor application architecture defined up front, this could be especially hazardous to meeting the project deadline. While it’s natural to let the application architecture emerge as the project progresses. Having some coding standards as a company with their own internal packages and libraries can help ensure that work is not getting repeated across different projects.

1. Requirements Management (Cobb, 2015)

If the user stories have too many gaps or have contradictions and/or extra complexities it can have inadvertent effects on the user experience and the success of the application. Additionally, too many changes will inevitably delay feature launches.

1. Project Portfolio Management (Cobb, 2015)

If there isn’t proper backing from management about the investments and competing projects within a company, the development efforts may be in vain. This can be tricky when costs come packaged in jargon such as points, velocity, and burn down charts as opposed to dollars and days.

## Determine whether or not a Scrum-agile approach was the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project.

The use of scrum-agile was the best approach for this project given where the project started and the direction it took on. If the team had chosen something like waterfall, then the entire project could have failed all together, or been implemented in a sub-par manner. For example, in the sessions Christy had with the end users it became clear that having the top destination list was important, which may not have been discovered or included at all had the team used another approach. Additionally, the change to focus on detox related niche travel packages as well as having a slider to iterate through the top destinations would likely not have been included in as timely a manner, if at all, had the team used something different. The focus on collaborations and communication is what drove the development to be closely aligned to the needs of the customers. The biggest con about choosing something like Agile was that the team was under a tight deadline in order to launch in the timeframe needed to make the application successful. Because of this having some sort of base planning and Minimum Viable Product more clearly defined upfront in a more Waterfall manner could have hypothetically helped the team ensure they would be able to hit their deadline. Overall, Agile was the best choice assuming at the end of the day the team still hit their needed delivery date for launching the application.

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