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Scrum Master

The SNHU travel agency’s stakeholder has requested the scrum team to add new functionality to their site. This new functionality requested a link that shows the top ten wellness locations, in a slideshow-like manner. Originally we used the waterfall method, a linear progression method focusing on one part of a project at a time. We decided for this project that we would change methods to the agile method. The agile method is Iterative as opposed to the waterfall’s linear. With a focus on smaller teams that work on one part of a project at a time, called a sprint. Each member of the team has a role, such as a scrum master, product owner, and developer.

The product owner, This member acts as a middle man between the scrum team and the stakeholders/end users. In addition to handling product backlog. The development team is responsible for implementation and testing of the product functionality. Lastly my role, the scrum master. The scrum master is the closest thing a scrum team has to a leader. My goal is to keep the scrum team on track and to lead the daily sprints. Best described as the team’s coach. Each member works in tandem to efficiently and accurately create a product to the stakeholder’s and companies standards.

During the software development cycle, Something that keeps the team on track is called the user stories. A user store is an expression from an end user. About what feature they would like to see added or changes in the current project, specifying what would be acceptable criteria. User stories are the concern of the product owner. That is they will gather the information and formulate a user story that will be used by the rest of the scrum team. When given to the team we will need to use the daily scrum to discuss our potential plans for how to implement these requests. I as the scrum master will lead the discussion helping the team follow my example. Originally we were asked to create a page that lists the top 5 locations. After creating this we had an update from a user’s story. That is that the user wanted the screen to be a slideshow. Since we use the agile method, we can frequently iterate on our plans. Allowing for the potential of updating our goals each daily scrum. This time we got the update from the product owner giving more specific details on what the user story entails. Giving our team the necessary information to create the top 5 destination page to the user’s requirements.

As the team’s coach. It is my responsibility to keep the team on track. Especially important thanks to the short time for each daily scrum, 15 minutes each. Each day our team has a daily scrum meeting. We will discuss our current plans for the sprint. One of the things I will encourage the team to discuss is if they have any kind of impediments. Then we will work to overcome these impediments, or if needed plan around them. At one point in the SNHU project the product owner per request of the stakeholder. Our team needed to change direction slightly. That is a focus on wellness locations. If we were still using the waterfall method we would have had to hold a larger more time consuming meeting to change direction. But thanks to the agile method we can change direction after a discussion in the daily scrum.

All roles need a level of communication skills. The scrum master quite possibly utilizes it the most. When the team first was preparing. It was my job to facilitate the conversation. I communicated with the product owner to get information about the stakeholders desires for our new website features. With this information, the team and I discussed how to plan for this project. We broke the project up into parts, each with a priority level and scale. Determining which needs to be tackled first. Then as the team goes about the project. We will have repeated daily meetings. I will lead each of these, asking the team if there are any potential issues that they encountered, what they have managed to accomplish last time, and what they plan to accomplish this time. In addition to maintaining communication with the product owner, by doing so I can keep the team up to date with necessary changes to the project. Such as the top 5 destinations being made into a slide show, then later having their focus changed to be wellness locations. Continuing to provide sufficient communication, so that the team can produce the best product possible.

The team now knows what the goals are. We need to prepare to utilize a project planning tool called JIRA. Using this tool we were able to create a product backlog. Creating an easily accessible list of all parts of the project, which we have completed and still needed to complete. So that other members of the team can check progress using this app. As opposed to needing to search for the physical board we make the backlog on. As for principles, incrementation in projects comes up multiple times. First we had a previously functional travel site. Then we increment by adding a popularity filter, to show the top 5 locations. Then we updated this filter to be in the form of a slide show. Lastly, changing the types of locations to be around wellness. Showing that our team was prepared for constant change and improvement when requested by users/stakeholders.

If our team stuck to the waterfall method. The only benefits I think we could have gained. It would be sticking to something familiar, not being required to have the team relearn everything. Along with avoiding the possibility of having a small team work on far too large of a part, causing them to take an unexpectedly long time to complete their task. I think given the smaller scale of the overall project tasked to us, the agile method gave us the flexibility to adapt and change when needed. Which came up at three separate points in this project. With the top 5 link, turning it into a slide show, then lastly changing the locations to be wellness themed. In any project where changes can be expected, like additions to a website based on user requests. It is likely that additional requirements and changes will be made, as you get more user stories from the product owner. Or if they refine any previously made stories. That is anything where you think changes will be common. In these cases, agile is strongly recommended.

As the team's scrum master, It is up to me to help facilitate the plans and communication necessary to create the best possible product for the company and product owner. Flexibility is of key importance, a team with this flexibility is open to change and iteration. Creating a quality and up to standard product. All of this is made easily thanks to the agile method.