**Sprint Review and Retrospective**

Kody Greenberg

Southern New Hampshire University

CS 250: Software Development Lifecycle

Mr. Joseph Martinez

February 15, 2023

The various roles in the Scrum-Agile framework came together and made the SNHU travel project take flight. The Product Owner (PO) took the initiative by creating open communication from the stakeholders and end-users to the development team. This facilitated the project’s success in making sure the development team worked on bringing value to the project in each sprint. The Scrum Master role ensures that all the various Scrum events take place correctly. Adding to others understanding of the principles behind Agile methodologies. I took the lead in the Sprint Planning, Daily Scrums, Backlog Refinement and encouraging regular communication among the team. I am also preparing this Review and Retrospective to assist us in the future. The Developers and Testers played the largest role in the success of this project. Their hard work and dedication to excellence is not to be overlooked. Working closely alongside them allows me the opportunity to see them daily and how hard they work. They work closely to ensure that the user stories have accurate test cases and are developed with those in mind to add value at each sprint iteration. Having both the developers and testers on the same team has greatly improved communications and expectations. The team can make decisions and work together to accomplish those goals. The test cases being updated regularly to ensure the client and end-users are satisfied, while not leaving the developer out of the loop, has been a great addition to the team.

Using the Scrum-Agile approach to the Software Development Lifecycle (SDLC) proved to be beneficial in completing user stories to satisfaction. The team was given a story about how they would first see top destinations on the top of the webpage. Some key points were left out so the Scrum Master, Developers, and Testers wrote to the PO and each other to come to an accurate conclusion. The PO showed us an example of what the users may expect to see. This assisted the team in ensuring they worked on what was expected and added appropriate value to the project. While the project was large, breaking it down into small chunks and working on it in iterations made the team successful in their endeavors while not being overwhelmed by the complexity of the project. Instead of taking on more stories, the team focused on the most important stories first and ensured they were “done” by the definition given.

Only because Scrum-Agile methodologies were used did the team overcome a change in the direction. Initially, the stakeholders wanted a new niche booking website that provided their current customers with new opportunities for vacation. However, mid-project new research showed more clients would be interested in “health and wellness” vacations. The team did not falter due to the change at all. Some worried that the top destinations they worked on were getting scrapped, but a quick conversation showed how we can still use everything written, we just adjust the contents. With Agile, change is the expectation and not the exception. It is inherently important as the Agile Manifesto values state “Responding to change over following a plan.” (Cobb, 2015) Because of this, the team was able to continue working, feeling satisfied, and knew nothing was wasted or unappreciated. Even with big changes, Agile takes it in stride and empowers the team to continue doing what they do best. It also prevents the dreaded “Death March” programming where there is no time for creativity or innovation. Rather, it allows for our team to continue to always do what they do best in a manner that benefits all in the team.

When we had the initial top five destinations changed slightly, we needed some clarity from our PO and I wanted to speak with the Tester as well to make sure that I was developing code that was required and not wasting any time. Here is an email I sent to our PO:

|  |
| --- |
| Dear Christy,  I saw the updates. Thanks so much for handling the Stakeholders and being flexible. I am sure we can handle these, but we may need to decide on a few things. Can you provide clarity on a couple things?   * Has the delivery date changed to accommodate these updates? * If not, have you thought about some user stories we may have to give up? * Is so, which ones are you thinking? Are you open to suggestions?   Thanks again for your hard work!  Kody |

This email was effective in that it accomplished its goal without being rude. I simply needed a little more information and helped to have our PO think of how we can accomplish this without overwhelming the team. Sometimes if a client requires a new feature, they may need to give up some functionality in another area if they are not willing to change their scheduled delivery date, as was the case here. They wanted to update to be more into wellness travels but not change the date expected to deliver the website update. So the PO had a frank discussion with them to let them know that there may be some requested features that do not make it in time for the initial date. Having open and transparent communication kept us from having a bigger issue later.

Here is an email I sent to the Tester for clarification:

|  |
| --- |
| Dear Brian,  I know that we both saw the updates, I just wanted to get your thoughts on the updates and what you might be thinking as requirements. I know you worked hard on those last test cases, and we appreciate that! So, I have full confidence you will handle these updates with ease. But if you could spare a couple moments and let me know:   * What are you thinking may need to be updated in the test cases? * Any suggestions on the other aspects of the code so far? * Any areas I can improve?   Thanks again for your assistance and thorough test cases!  Kody |

This email was effective in that it encouraged collaboration from the developers and testers. To be successful it is important to have good communication between team members. Encouraging regular communication in a healthy way will build up teamwork and collaboration will be normal and not an exception. By asking questions and getting feedback it shows that you want to work with a person and not against them. Carefully wording emails is especially important, so no misunderstanding happens. A better option may be to converse with the members face-to-face but if that is not possible, being cautious in an email is always the way to go.

A great tool the team made use of was a Kanban Board online with Jira software. The team was able to get a little training on Jira and then use it in line with the Agile implementation. We used it as an information radiator so all would know where each member was. This allowed us briefly to see what each team member was currently working on and the progress on the project. Our Daily Scrums were also an opportunity for each to express concerns, how they overcame obstacles, and what they will work on today. Afterwards, we would update the Kanban Board and add anything that needed to be or update a task to a new location if needed.

Every single decision comes with pros or cons. I will mention some of the cons first. We noticed initially there is a large learning curve to Agile. This is not something the be implemented “on the fly” nor can it be implemented overnight. This is something to continually work on and improve. If we try to only implement this in the development cycle, it may cause a lot of issues in oversight. This will be important to implement throughout the company and not just in one specific area. It is a major shift in thinking and planning. Which will bring growing pains.

There are several pros to Agile methodology. It builds closer friendships among co-workers as it fosters regular beneficial communications. It gives transparency to Work In Progress (WIP) and tasks getting accomplished. It allows for creativity and innovation. There is much more flexibility in the work and schedule. For instance, if we think we failed during a sprint, it is not viewed as a failure but rather a learning opportunity. Another thought process change is that we want to “fail early, fail often.” This does not mean we try to fail or grind to a halt if something does not work. Instead, we have these opportunities open to us. If we successfully meet them and overcome them, we will see great expansion in our abilities to handle large and complex assignments. The team is not berated for an idea that fails, rather we come together as a team, work through it and revise our plan accordingly.

For the SNHU travel project this was undoubtedly a great choice to use an Agile methodology. We had the flexibility to adjust and change direction, we had great teamwork and overall had fun doing our jobs. We produced a great website that fulfilled all our clients’ expectations. This was only because we had great transparent communication throughout the project. With a waterfall method, we would not have been able to adjust and change with the new information given. We would have been stuck and likely would not have made the schedule. Instead, we worked through all the changes and adjustments. I am very proud of the work accomplished in this. Of course, there will always be room for improvement, but that is exactly what Agile methodologies allow us to do. We can improve our communication, friendships, expectations, speed, and even more but only with Agile. I truly believe that if Agile is implemented in the entire company, as long as it is fully supported, it will bring benefits we cannot imagine or forecast.

**References:**

Cobb, C. G. (2015). *The Project Manager's Guide to Mastering Agile: Principles and Practices for an Adaptive Approach*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.