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Final Project

The past weeks as I took on each role on the Scrum-agile Team, I have learned a lot about agile, scrum, and the different roles that contribute to the project. There are four main roles on the team that each played a crucial role in the actual achievement of the goal that the team had set at the beginning of the project. The first role I want to discuss is the Scrum Master. I think that the role of the scrum master is critical to the success of the team in a few ways. As I started off the project as the scrum master, I learned about how important the series of scrum events are. There are a series of events that the scrum master both initiates and facilitates that allow the team to have meaningful productive conversations about the work that needs done and any issues that the team is having with completing the work. This is so important because without the scrum master to keep everyone on track and to ensure that any communication that needs to happen is happening, the team would at the very least be much less productive or slower, and at worst, would not be able to complete their work at all.

Next, I took on the role of the product owner. This role to me seemed to be the person that helps form the vision and guide the team to actually be able to make it happen. I think that this role is really important because this person can really take the time to discuss with the customer their requirements and their vision for the product that they need, and then to take the time to convey that vision to the team in an effective way that can help the group focus on the top priorities and know exactly what the goals are. One step in that process that I did with the SNHU Travel project was to create user stories and prioritize them based on what the user had communicated to me. I felt that the user stories made the actual goal and vision very clear to the rest of the team as I moved on to perform other roles.

After having acted as the product owner, I then took on the role of the tester. This role again is crucial just like all the other roles. As the tester, I took a look at the user stories that the product owner had provided to me, and I started dissecting them even further. Each user story needs to meet a certain set of criteria and needs certain functionalities in order to meet the goal set by the customer for the product that they want. I then needed to come up with a series of tests for each of the user stories to test all of the necessary functionality of what the application could actually do. I had to break it down all the way to even which buttons needed to be present, what they needed to do, and what specific information needed to be displayed and when. This is a really important role, as it then allows the developer to have even clearer expectations of what they need to accomplish.

And of course, lastly I took on the role of the developer. I think that this role is pretty easy to understand its importance. Without the developer to actually write the code and create the product, there wouldn’t be a product at all. As I began the developer role, there were a lot of issues to figure out, bugs to fix, and changes to be made as the customer changed their mind.

As I have detailed, I think that it really required all of the different roles in this scrum-agile approach to help each of the user stories to go all the way from creation to completion. From the scrum master organizing the necessary communication between the team to the product owner communicating the customer’s vision to the team, to the tester ensuring that the final product will meet all expectations and work properly to the developer actually writing the final code for the travel project, it took all of them to make the product come to life.

Partway through everything, the customer changed the requirements on me, and the team had to adjust. However, because we were using the scrum agile methodology, it really was not too big of a deal or too difficult to adjust. As we were using user stories and making progress in small sprints, when the team is notified of necessary changes, the user stories can be adjusted however they need, and then reprioritized as necessary. In this way, the changes that were made to the travel project really didn’t interrupt or slow the flow of the project down much at all.

As the project progressed, there were times where I needed to ask team members for clarification on certain things. Here is an example of that communication as I was the tester and needed more clarification from the product owner on a couple of the user stories:

To: Christy

Subject: User Story Clarifications

Dear Christy,

As I was looking at your user stories that you sent over to me, I had a few clarifying questions, the answers to which would be very helpful to me as I write test cases for each of them. I want to make sure that my tests are including everything that they need to and that they are checking things accurately.

For User Story One:

* Should the list of categories be a part of the profile section, or should we be making a subsection called search preferences to contain that list?
* Would it be better to have the list already displayed with every option, or should we implement a search feature so that the list isn’t so long to start off with?

For User Story Three:

* Would you like the pricing filters to have both a minimum and maximum price input, or should we limit it to just the maximum price input box?

Thank you much,

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This was an effective way to communicate with the product owner as it expressed clearly to her what information I was missing, and it prompted a response from her with the information that would be necessary for me to make my contributions to the project.

One of the tools that really helped the team the most from my experience with the travel project was the product backlog. This made it easy for every member of the team to see what needs to be done now, and what is upcoming. It also helped to make sure that nobody was confused about the priority order of all the different things that needed to get done.

I think that the agile process could have some drawbacks based on how much time was required just for communicating and utilizing the tools themselves. However, I think that overall, those sacrifices of time lead to much more efficient work and lead to a product that was much more satisfying to the customer. I do believe that the scrum agile approach was the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project for those reasons.