7-1 Final Project

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The Scrum-agile Team has various roles that each contributed to success to the SNHU Travel Project in their own unique ways. All contributions from the various roles play a crucial part in ensuring that the Scrum-agile process flows smoothly for the entire duration of the project. Let’s take a moment to look at each role and discuss what contributions they made towards the success of this project.

Let’s kick things off by talking about the Product Owner. The Product Owner is the main communication between the client, customers, and Scrum-agile team. Now, it’s obvious right off the bat how crucial the contributions of the Product Owner can be because without proper insight, the team is doomed to fail. One way the Product Owner gained insight during this project was the use of focus groups to better understand what the end users would like in terms of aesthetics and functionality of the website. These focus groups then played an important role in developing user stories, which is another big contribution from the Product Owner. User stories give the team “targets” to hit and can act as a barometer for success. User stories garner story points which give the team something to gauge the length of their Sprints and provide value to their work.

Next, we’ll dive into some of the Scrum Master’s contributions. The role of Scrum Master is a unique one, a combination of a Manager/Supervisor, Risk Analyst, and Project Coordinator. The Scrum Master on this team, or any Scrum-agile team, works throughout the entire project to maintain the cohesion of the team. This is achieved in part with the use of events such as Daily Scrums, Sprint Reviews, and Sprint Retrospectives. During an event like a Daily Scrum, the team gains the opportunity to align itself each and every day with the rest of the team to be a well-oiled machine. Of course, even well-oiled machines have problems every now and then. This is where the Scrum Master comes into play, working to get ahead of any roadblocks or issues the team may run into. During the Daily Scrums, the Scrum Master can learn of potential issues a team member may have and can work to help eliminate them before they become full on roadblocks.

Moving on from the Scrum Master, let’s talk Developers. On a large scale, most of us are aware of what Developers/Programmers do. Largely, they build the programs by writing various types of code. When it comes to the Scrum-agile team, they contribute to a couple other areas as well. Communication is absolutely the most important piece of any team, project, company, you name it, and if the communication is poor then the outcome will likely be poor as well. Developers (and Testers but we’ll get to them in a moment) success relies on the communication of the team. This is why the contributions of the roles mentioned above are so important. Without proper insight from the Product Owner, the Developers are in the dark on what to build. Without the right tools for communication overseen by the Scrum Master, the Developers will have a much harder time working with the rest of the team to develop the program in an efficient manner. On the flip side, without proper communication from the Developers, the Product Owner and Scrum Master cannot possibly gauge where the project stands and Testers would have a much harder time trying to collaborate with the Developers to solidify code and sections of the programs. During this project for example, the Developer took feedback that the Product Owner received from the client and applied that to a previously made slideshow presentation to adjust for that specific request. Without solid communication, there is no way that information would be relayed and received effectively.

Last, but certainly not least, are the Testers. Any good company knows that without good Testers, you are bound to run into a myriad of issues right before release or after the release of the product. Testers during this project used user stories after production was done to ensure satisfaction of the outcomes. User stories not only allow the team to gauge how much work a task is or what users and clients want to see, they also give a “what is considered success” standard for the Testers to determine what is successful. Testers also play a critical role in developing user stories as well which goes to show that every role on a Scrum-agile team plays a crucial part from beginning to end.

Like most projects, there is always going to be something that pops up and throws a wrench in your plans. The SNHU Travel project was certainly no exception to this. During this project, the client spoke to the Product Owner about wanting to change the specific direction of the website. The client wanted to change the content to a specific style of travel/vacation packages. While something like this is never convenient for the team, a scrum-agile approach helps the transition not be as painful as it could be. The team met, in a Daily Scrum kind of fashion so that the Product Owner to discuss the changes with the team and gauge how badly this could throw off the project. Once the team had a solid understanding of what needed to be done, it was time to go to work and see just how this would be accomplished. Using the agile approach allowed them to fit the time needed for the change by sliding other low importance items back in the Sprint timeline. Using Sprints really helped facilitate this change because they were not completely bound to a timeline, they are designed with flexibility in mind.

When we take an overall look at the effectiveness of the Scrum-agile approach for the SNHU Travel project, we can conclude that there are many pros that come along with it but there are also some cons as well. Nothing is perfect and the Scrum-agile approach has its flaws to prove that so let’s discuss some of the flaws. Perhaps the most glaring flaw could be the time “wasted” from the many meetings that take place throughout the project. Some could consider it “communication overkill” when meetings that happen daily especially seem to continue providing the same information repeatedly. Things such as that can be exhausting for the team and feel as if they are just wasting time they could be spending on the actual project. Another flaw that could occur comes from the hands of the client. During this project, there was one change that the client wanted to make which in the end wasn’t too big of a change. Depending on the client, they could run away with something like this. Allowing and completing a sudden change once allows the door to be open for the client to feel like they can make changes whenever they want. While the client is entitled to get the product they desire, catering to the client’s needs or rather their desires can really weigh on the team after a couple pivots have to happen. Like anything though, the Scrum-agile approach has plenty of pros as well. To bounce off the con I just mentioned, the Scrum-agile approach allowed that change to be made rather seamlessly and it did not throw the trajectory of the project off badly enough where a large pivot needed to happen. So, while changes are frustrating no matter what, having a system in place that helps incorporate the changes with ease is something that is most definitely a pro. Another pro I’ll cover is the use of user stories, story points, and Sprints. While these are three separate things, they work together to help create the timelines necessary when using a Scrum-agile approach. The team uses user stories to represent items to be completed and the metric to which they consider a user story complete. Story points come from the user stories and are used to assess the value of the amount of work a user story requires to be completed. User stories and story points are then used when planning Sprints to understand how much work can be done in the Sprint’s timeframe. Each Sprint is then the appropriate workload and timeframe for the team to complete what needs done, but this also allows the team some wiggle room in the event of changes popping up because they are not married to one thing for a long duration.

In conclusion, I have determined that the Scrum-agile approach was the best approach for the SNHU Travel project. We live in a world now where trends are everything, especially to consumers and users. Trends are ever-changing and just like the scenario we had with this project, sometimes changing at the right time quickly can be the difference of millions of dollars to clients. A Scrum-agile approach gives the best opportunity to adapt to changes and implement them efficiently. That is the main reason that I believe the Scrum-agile approach was the right approach for this project and should certainly be considered for many for projects down the line at Chada Tech.