**Module Seven Project**

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Inn the world of computer science, software and technology are changing every day, and it can be hard to keep up with the times. That’s why taking an agile approach on this, and future, projects will benefit the team. Using agile allowed us to quickly adapt to changes in the project, communicate our needs effectively, and complete our tasks in timely, measurable ways. The various roles on the team helped bring it all together, with everyone doing their part and making this project what it is today.

The product owner effectively communicated with SNHU Travel to get us the information we needed in order to do this project well. Using answers from a focus group, our product owner was able to create user stories for our sprints that our developers and testers both could use to bring our travel site together. In agile, user stories are necessary to break down requirements of the project into manageable chunks with clear success parameters. As the scrum master, I organized our daily scrums, this retrospective and review, sprint planning, and backlog refinement. I worked with our team members to plan the sprint and the backlog refinement, as those are tasks that require everyone’s input. Doing these tasks together helped with self-management, accountability, and making sure everyone knows what all the project entails.

Our developer worked to fulfill our user stories, creating the travel destination lists and filters required for SNHU Travel. With input from our tester, who created our test cases to better narrow down what exactly needed done with specific parts of the project, our developer turned the lists into slideshows for the users. Without the developer and tester, this project would never have left the whiteboard and made it onto the computer. With their coding, design, and bug fixes, the SNHU Travel project really came to life.

An important part of any agile project is the user stories, as mentioned before. They break down large tasks into more manageable bites – no pun intended – to get the project done with something to show for it at the end of every sprint. Using an agile approach, we were able to communicate with one another to figure out what needed to be in the user stories, how far each one needed broken down so they weren’t epic, and refine what was necessary and what was redundant. Doing it this way, we were able to determine what was manageable for us and what we were capable of doing in a sprint instead of having a management team telling us what do to with a deadline thrown on it.

When the project changed from having destination lists to destination slideshows, it was easy enough to manage with agile. Instead of having to rewrite the whole project, our developer only had to adjust specific classes in the programming. It didn’t take much time, and it was able to be changed right away instead of at the very end when things were done. It was another user story added to the backlog, and then acknowledged during sprint planning and during the sprint. The project continued as normal, with nothing put on hold or set back.

Open communication is an important aspect in any workplace, whether it be developers working on a project or a waiter relaying orders to a chef. You can’t know what needs done if this isn’t communicated to you, which is why our tester Brian reached out to product owner Christy with some clarifying questions. A part of the e-mail went like this, “Hey Christy, I had some questions I’d hoped you could clear up for me on the SNHU Travel project. For the first user story, what profile preferences can the user set that would affect their recommended vacation list?”

Brian was open, respectful, and to the point. He didn’t waste any time with his questions, and his questions were clear and concise. He needed to know the specifics of the user stories so the project could be created in a way that aligned with the client’s needs, and he wouldn’t get these answers unless he reached out and communicated with the product owner. Since the product owner is in charge of communicating with the stakeholders and clients, thus knowing more intimately what they want and need, reaching out to Christy was the best way for Brian to get this information. With Christy’s clarifying e-mail she sent back in a timely manner, Brian got the answers to his questions and work on the project was able to resume without delay.

There are many tools available to us these days that can help with project management and communication, making our jobs easier. Some of these tools are software such as Jira or VersionOne. Much like the whiteboard concept with user stories organized on it, this software can show us what user stories are being worked on in the current sprint, which ones are completed, and ones that haven’t been touched yet. They can tell us who is working on what task, and their level of completion. They are also a great way to communicate and see all of this information without having to physically leave your desk to go to another room, or contact someone in another location. This enables us to complete our work faster, with less time spent on physically moving about or e-mailing people to find answers to some questions we may have. Using these tools also helps save time my removing the need for daily sprints; we can see what everyone has worked on the previous day and what their current task is for that day, and if anyone has any issues impeding their work they can reach out to the necessary teammates for a resolution. A stand-up every week or two would still be necessary to make sure everyone is where they need to be and the current sprint is going as planned, but the wonderful part of agile is that even if things aren’t going necessarily how they were planned out, we can still work around it and keep the project moving forward.

Handling the SNHU Travel project in an agile way enabled the team to keep the work as simple as possible while still meeting all of the client requirements in a modern way. We were able to adapt to changes easily, and SNHU Travel was able to stay up-to-date with our work so we could have direct input of their thoughts on our work as it was ongoing. Everyone was aware of all the team’s tasks, and with open, respectful, timely communication we were able to stay on track and meet all of our timelines. A project of this size could have been done in a waterfall style, but we would have had to make changes to meet client needs at the end of the project instead of during, which prevented time and resources wasted. With that in mind, I believe agile practices were the best way forward for this project.