SNHU Travel Sprint Retrospective

CS-250-J7563 Software Development Lifecycle 23EW5

Peter Thoman

Developing SNHU Travel’s website features was an interesting way to be introduced to the idea of Agile Project Management. Not knowing anything about Agile at all, I have come full circle to understand the methodologies fine points and be able to apply them to our new ways of managing projects here at Chada Tech. A major component to the use of agile is the Scrum Team and how it is assigned in the correct environment in our organization. For this project Product Owners were able to collect and organize user stories from the customer and create specific timelines and product backlogs to organize the creation of customer product requests into user stories. The Scrum Masters used the product backlogs to organize and schedule sprints with the Developers and testers. The developers then developed incremental pieces of the full programs, and the testers tested the small executables created by the developers with end users for feedback and updates to user story requirements during development. This helped in correct end product creation. Scrum Masters continued to support their scrum teams throughout the sprints by facilitating all the necessary tools to meet their team’s project requirements. This was very efficient and created by the end of the epic or project, a valuable and functional final product for the customer. Each role of the Scrum team had a crucial function for the project and were all held equally accountable for the predetermined definition of done for each sprint.

The product backlog has been a useful tool in organizing and scheduling user stories for design, testing, and completion. By prioritizing certain stories over others, and projecting time of completion in realistic ways, our estimations with customer requests are more manageable and successful. The original requests of SNHU Travel to produce a list system for their website along with a user profile aspect became a project that included both elements and a search engine function developed for the existing platform. A user social media platform for user preference profiles was discussed but not planned due to significance of resources needed for development. When SNHU decided to alter their requests mid project, our teams were able to adjust accordingly because the testers and developers were already working with end users adjusting initial user stories to fit new customer requirements. Product Owner’s were asked to adjust the total project, and did accordingly because of the very open channels of communication between them and all members of the scrum teams, but especially the Scrum Masters. This enabled efficient development and required less resources than past waterfall projects.

Throughout this project there was a vast upward shift in communication from our previous project under waterfall management. Agile has provided us with a completely transparent development environment that our customers and staff appreciated and used for success. Our organization in past years has not been able to adapt as quickly to customer requirements because the channels of communication were closed between the development teams and the end users during product development. With agile we are able to adjust development in real time to avoid wasted time and resources in redevelopment after delivering final products that need retooling because of unforeseen variables in the previous waterfall closed development process. Our email threads were plentiful this project, but that amount of communication created a satisfied customer at the end of the project because SNHU Travel received the product it needed designed to it’s specifications. Every team member had their own requirements, and these were facilitated by the Scrum Masters because of the daily scrums. The daily meetings were effective and beneficial in creating an openness of communication. The kanban board used online were a very useful tool in communicating to our full team the status and schedule of all the deliverables promised to the customer. By using a cloud based organizational software, we were able to complete components remotely and remain organizationally coordinated. Having a centralized tool to organize and display development in progress helped our product owners communicate with SNHU successful time estimates and correct status of specifics elements of the project in development.

The most successful component of our agile approach regarding this project was transparency of communication, and the scrum team framework. These two components applied to our project completely transformed our system of execution. In the waterfall methods of our past, we have not been as efficient in final product creation and delivery, because of the brute force development methods that were in place. By using a push approach, we over spent resources creating products of lower value in longer amounts of time. This new pull method allows the opportunity for inter developmental shift and more successful completion of end products. The product backlogs organized the needs of the customer with priority and resource projection. This was more useful than creating our own version of the customer’s executable based on arbitrary needs predicted by our development team. Another important component to our success was utilizing a principle of agile in accepting failure as a path to success and being open to change. The customer’s needs shifted mid-way through the project and by accepting changes as opposed to ignoring them and having to implement then post production, the teams were able to produce the correct deliverables in the projected sprint lengths. Finally, because of the agreed upon definition of done with SNHU Travel, the program was completed to their specifications and our relationship has fortified with our success.

In conclusion, this particular project was successful with an agile approach, but that does not mean that every project calls for this method. Responding to change in this project was beneficial because SNHU Travel needed to adjust their needs mid-project. If the next customer lacks this requirement, we may be able to follow a predetermined rigid production schedule. Agile afforded this mobility and saved us valuable time in redevelopment avoided at the end of the project. By working with individuals and interactions over processes and tools the final product was more valuable to the customer because it had the necessary components they requested. If a future project needs less customer input, we may be able to use a brute force method and simply create a product, but these elements can be altered depending on the project. That is a true benefit of agile in the ability to change and retool development in real time to fit customer needs while spending just enough resources to be successful. This method was a good fit for our SNHU Travel project because of the customer needs, and the components necessary for completion. It is in Chada Tech’s best interest to tailor their project management methods to each project to economize their resources moving forward. This is the true agile way.