

## Sprint Review and Retrospective: SNHU Travel Project

The Scrum-agile Team for the project was made up of four members: Product Owner, Scrum Master, Developer, and Tester. I took on a different role each week to gain a better understanding of the responsibilities of all four roles. The Product Owner initiates the project and kick-starts the first team meeting by presenting the team with a Product Backlog. The Product Backlog contains the prioritization of user stories that help the development team prioritize their work and understand the client's goals for the project. The creation and maintaining of the Product Backlog are responsibilities of the Product Owner. The Product Backlog is the foundation and structure of the project. It allows other work to be build upon, therefore, maintaining this item is important to the agile framework and is one of the main ways that the Product Owner contributed to the success of the project. Another way is by being the connector between the client and Scrum Team; ensuring that communications are directed to the correct party in a timely manner. An example of this in the project was when the client made changes to their initial goals for the project and layout for the website, and I, as the Product Owner, communicated the changes to the Scrum Team via an e-mail and team meeting.

The next role to discuss is that of the Scrum Master. One of the main ways that I contributed to the success of the project in this role is by acting as a coach for the development team, especially during the Daily Scrum. I started the first Daily Scrum by providing the guidelines for the meeting, such as the 15-minute time window for the meeting and key questions to answer during the meeting. From there, I allowed the team to run the meeting and only spoke up when there was an unanswerable question, confusion, a violation of the Team Charter, or a need to call out sidebarring a topic. I also helped the team ensure that the meeting stays within the 15-minute meeting window.

Some of the ways that the Developer role added value to the success of the project were through setting an execution plan for development after receiving the Product Backlog, driving the

Daily Scrum meetings to update the team on the progress of the project's development, and requesting that the Product Owner communicates changes to the user stories as close to real-time as possible. Last, but not least, the main way that the Tester role added value to the success of the project was by creating testing scenarios for the user stories. This is an important responsibility in agile, because testing must occur throughout the development process to prevent the risk of issues stacking up and causing big problems and churn towards the end of the project.

A Scrum-agile approach to the SDLC helped each of the user stories come to completion by, first, clearly identifying the type of user, problem, and wanted solution. These are clearly identified using the format of "As a *<type of user>* I want to *<perform some task>* so that I can *<achieve some goal>*". This format is easy to communicate to the Scrum Team what the client expects for the project's outcome. The other agile approach that helped the user stories come to completion is the prioritizing of the stories in the Product Backlog. This allows the development team to understand their level of importance and prioritize their work accordingly to meet the deadlines and needs of each user story. Lastly, the agile approach promotes testing throughout the SDLC instead of just towards the end, therefore, the Tester is able to put together testing scenarios using the user stories and work alongside the Developer to ensure a proactive approach to fixing issues that arise in the development process. An example of the importance of this in the project was when the Tester reached out to the Product Owner to ask for clarifications on the layout of a user story and discovered that the client wanted a completely different layout than what was initially communicated. If the Tester only tested the user story after the Developer completed the development of it, then it might have been too late in the SDLC to make changes to the development and/or cost the company more resources to make the changes. Handling any issue at the end of the SDLC increases the risk that the project is not

completed correctly and/or on time, which then creates frustration and a bad customer experience for the client.

A Scrum-agile approach supported the project completion when the project changed direction by allowing the development team to not have to start over from scratch. Instead, the Product Owner deprioritized other user stories in the Product Backlog to give the development team more resources to focus on the adjustments instead. The development team is able to build upon what they already had. Furthermore, the testing scenarios were adjusted to meet the needs of the new direction, since testing can occur in concurrent with development in the Scrum-agile approach.

I ensured effective communications while working on the project by establishing ground rules for effective communications at the start of the project. These rules were included in the Team Charter that I put together as the Scrum Master. Some of these rules are: creating and maintaining a safe and comfortable space where all team members can share their inputs, communicate issues close to real-time as possible, communicate changes via e-mail in order to create a visual reference, and then follow-up on the changes at the next team meeting to ensure that everyone is on the same page about the changes. Setting these ground rules at the start of the project encouraged collaboration, because it provided the team with clear expectations for a successful project. These communication techniques especially helped the project to be successful when the client changed the focus of the product to wellness after development had begun. As the Product Owner, I gathered the team together in a meeting to discuss the changes, clarify that the development time will not change, and ensure that the team knows I will deprioritize the remaining user stories to allow them to support the changes accordingly. This meeting also allowed me to understand the development team's concerns and how we could move forward as a team. It was an effective way to ensure that everyone was aware of the changes and come up with a new plan to accommodate the changes quickly.

If I had to choose one Scrum event that helped the team be successful, it would be the Daily Scrum. This is because these quick daily meetings were insightful for the team to get high-level updates on where each member was at in the development process and issues that they may be experiencing. It is very important to have these updates in the world of agile where everyone on the team is working alongside each other and there are many moving parts. A specific organization tool that the team used to help keep the Daily Scrum meetings structured is a virtual information radiator. This tool allowed us to provide updates on the project virtually. This means that anyone, especially Leadership and stakeholders who do not attend the Daily Scrum meetings, can conveniently access the virtual information radiator from anywhere.

The main pro of the Scrum-agile approach in the SNHU Travel project is that it allowed the team to work alongside each other under a time constraint, instead of having to wait until one person finishes a task before another can start. Another pro is that it allows testing to occur while development is in progress. This allows the project to move along quicker and reduces the risk of having piled up issues to fix towards the end of the project. However, the flexibility of the Scrum-agile approach can be a double-edge sword, and this is one con that I experienced using this approach on the project. More specifically, allowing clients to make changes to their product's vision after the development has started can create frustration and extra work for the development team. This occurred when I had to recreate the testing scenarios to adapt to the client's changes while I was in the Tester role. Another con that I experienced on this project is that the deadline for the project does not move out even when the client changes the scope for the project after it has already begun. However, I think that the pros outweigh the cons in this project, especially thanks to the effective communication across the team and the Product Owner's deprioritizing of the user stories accordingly. Overall, I believe that the Scrum-agile approach was the best approach for the SNHU Travel project.