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Sergio H. Passos

Southern New Hampshire University

Government Agency Technical Brief

The early stages of software development were straightforward. The audience had no real expectations on what they wanted from a particular software. Everything is new and exciting, so anything to release was mostly gobbled up by the consumers. However, the audience has changed. Consumers are well versed in today's technological world. They have a minimum expectation on what software needs to be able to do. Additionally, the market is so saturated that new features are constantly changing the landscape. Shifting the paradigm of consumer expectation. Adaptability is key for surviving in today's market. The agile approach takes this into consideration; The aging waterfall development methodology can no longer keep up with today's market and expectations.

Applying Roles

The Scrum process contains a few key roles in achieving a successful Scrum team. The Scrum Master aids the team and the Product Owner by ensuring that they are following the agile development practices. This helps the Product Owner and the team focus on the development process and guarantees they are taking full advantage of the agile process. The next key role is the Product Owner. They highlight the team's development process by prioritizing the product backlog and writing the user stories for them. They also can cancel Sprints and reprioritize the Product Backlog, this ensures the product is meeting deadlines and expectations. Finally, the team has a few roles. Our agile approaches used the Development and Tester roles for the team. The Developers are self-efficient experts who are accountable for developing the product. They have no team leader; they are a collective group that communicates and works together.

Additionally, the Tester aids the Developers in the development process. Duties include testing each feature for bugs and certifying that the features are of high quality.

Completing User Stories

User Stories explain a feature from the Product. The Product Backlog consists of these stories. They describe in a direct and concise manner of what a user would need without going into details. This gives the team an idea of what the user should expect from a feature. Once the Product Backlog has been prioritized, the team conducts a Sprint. These Sprints are the backbone of the agile development process. Before the Sprint, the teams carry out Sprint Planning, which has the team selecting what the Sprint Goal will be. Once selected, the Sprint begins; they usually last typically from 1-3 weeks long. This process allows the team to work in unison on the Sprint. Permitting them to get more work done due to the collaboration. This guarantees that each user story is fleshed out and fully realized by the team.

Handling Interruptions

Compared to the aging Waterfall development, the Agile process helps manage changes during the development cycle. Reasons for change to a feature or the product is multifaceted. From recent market changes, to defects in the software that make it too time consuming to fix. While developing for SNHU Travel, we had the Product Owner issue change halfway through our development. They noticed a change in the market and prioritized the Product Backlog. This change affected the next item in the Product Backlog. Which focused on this new change in the market. This is a great example on how the vision of the product is at the heart of the development. Which ensures that the product meets expectations and reflects that vision into the software.

Communication

When learning the agile process, it is evident that communication plays an indispensable role. This is seen right away in the early stages of development. From discussing the Backlog refinement, to planning the next Sprint, all with the team and Product Owner. Communication is a foundational pillar in the agile process. However, nothing compares to the interaction that is achieved in the Daily Scrum. This short meeting with the team and Scrum Master is vital for a successful development. The product Owner can attend these meetings, but often they are not required. This open structured meeting allows the team to share progress and obstacles for achieving the Sprint Goal. Our most recent project was a testament to the difference in communication that everyone experienced. Besides the Daily Scrum, we communicated throughout the day through emails, from the Product Owner, Developers, and Tester. This ensured that we were all assisting each other and pushing to achieve our Sprint Goals.

Organizational Tools

The agile system has a plethora of tools to aid in the development process. Its most noticeable one has been JIRA; this tool embodies the agile process. Communication with the team is at the forefront of its purpose. Additionally, it promotes sprint planning, improved team focus, and iterative development. Nevertheless, the greatest tool our team experienced was utilizing the agile process. Sprints promoted bite sized feature increments, which mentally lightened the load for the team. Especially since the team was working together as a whole. This boosted everyone's confidence and allowed the team to learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses. The agile development process is monumentally better for the software development life cycle.

Evaluating The Agile Process

Everything that has been said so far has been nothing but praise for the agile approach. This approach brought excitement back into the development process. Working closer with our coworkers and promoting a positive work ethic. This is all due to how the agile process incorporates communication and iterative development into the software development process. The only process I would tweak from the agile methodology would be the Sprint Retrospective. This is conducted after each Sprint. It is a way for the team to look back and see what could have been different. This feedback is important; however, it should be combined into the final Retrospective. Since I feel it takes away from the momentum of finishing each Sprint.