Final Project – Sprint Review and Retrospective

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SNHU Travel is a travel agency seeking to expand their client base with new tools for their customers. We had our Product Owner, Christy, hold a focus group with several of SNHU Travel’s customers to find which tools would help accomplish expanding the client base. Specifically, Christy asked for input for new products and booking tools, since our client’s customers currently use other competitors as well as SNHU Travel, to book travel packages.

Our Agile team consists of the Product Owner, Scrum Master, and the Developers. Our Product Owner, Christy, created and prioritized the Product Backlog, provided team direction, and helped prioritize work to be done to maximize the product value. Holding the focus group helped Christy create the Product Backlog, giving us the User Stories to be focused on. Our Scrum Master, Ron, helped keep the team accountable and guaranteed the Scrum process held over the progression of the project. He was able to guide the development team to accomplish their Sprint goals and led the Daily Scrum meetings. Our development team has planned each Sprint, design and developed the coding necessary for the project, and collaborated with one another to produce a new SNHU Travel webpage.

We used Christy’s focus group to create three different User Stories. The first user story focuses on a “Top 10 Hottest Destinations”. As a frequent traveler, this user would like the hottest destinations to be listed so they can easily see destinations they might not have necessarily found on their own. The second user story would like to see sorting and filtering options, specifically for price limits. As a thrifty traveler, this user would like to define the minimum and maximum they are willing to spend on a destination to stay within their travel budget. The third user story leads us to a mobile application. Although this would be more of a user epic than a story, we are including this here for future development. As a young traveler, this user would like to see SNHU Travel adapt to a mobile application so they can research and book travel destinations from the comfort of their mobile device instead of their personal computer.

Through use of the Daily Scrum and Sprint Planning, our development team was able to use these three user stories to plan and design different implementations into SNHU Travel’s existing web-based application. In their first Sprint Planning, the development team - Brian the QA Tester and Nicole the Developer - reviewed these user stories and had questions for Christy to clarify parts of the Product Backlog. Brian sent Christy an email for further clarification on each user story. To follow user story one, Brian asked if the “Top 10” destinations needed to be listed on the same page of separately like a slideshow. He also asked if the list should count down from 10 to 1 or have number 1 listed first. Through this process, we narrowed the “Top 10” down to a “Top 5”, which will be listed with number one first, and will take the appearance of a slideshow.

Nicole developed the first slideshow, which included top destinations Orlando, Anaheim, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Paris. Brian tested the slideshow for quality assurance, and it passed. Christy submitted the first slideshow back to Amanda, the President of SNHU Travel, for initial approval. This is when Amanda changed the specifications for the “Top 5” to focus on detox/wellness destinations, based on an industry report showing this focus will be the next big travel sector. Agile development methodology lives for this type of client change, and so Christy was able to change the Product Backlog to accommodate this change. In the following Daily Scrum, Christy brought the changes to the team, and Nicole and Brian were able to accommodate the shift in destinations. Tom asked clarifying questions to ensure the product deadlines will remain the same or shift with the new changes. Christy clarified we will be keeping the same deadline, but she will be prioritizing the Backlog to assist with the shift.

Nicole was able to implement these changes to the destination. The new “Top 5” destinations, with the focus on detox/wellness now include The Grand Canyon AZ, Amangiri UT, Mii Amo Spa AZ, Red Mountain Resort UT, and The Ranch CA. Each destination now emphasizes mental clarification and detox. This change was implemented within one Sprint, following the Sprint Planning after the meeting with Amanda.

One of the most effective tools the team used to ensure productivity and quality was an information radiator, a Big Visible Chart. In the developers’ office, their north wall was used to house this Big Visible Chart, which included a burn down chart, a task board, and the story board with had each user story. Their burn down chart showed a progression of how much work was still to be completed. Their task board showed their current Sprint’s backlog and allowed everyone to see which tasks needed to be done within that Sprint. Each Sprint Planning, they would update this task board to show what tasks would be a part of their upcoming Sprint. Their story board showed each other three user stories they were to focus on, and the progress on each of the stories. This Big Visible Chart was a key in each Daily Scrum meeting, as they could reference each part of the board and ask Tom for any help needed to accomplish any task in their Sprint.

Overall, I believe the Scrum-agile approach to this specific SNHU Travel project was effective. We needed a quick turn-over from project start to implementation to ensure SNHU Travel could beat their competitors to the market for this year’s new Hottest Destinations, especially with the new focus on wellness and detox. With agile, we were able to accommodate the shift from a simple “Top 5” to one with a specific focus quickly and efficiently. However, with Agile, it was easy for our team to get sidetracked in the Daily Scrum meetings, often getting off task with talk about personal lives and not focused on the daily tasks at hand. In Agile, every minute can be critical.