Dan Story  
CS-250  
Final Project

The core concepts of the Agile Methodology are communication and teamwork. The various roles we needed were the Product Owner, the Scrum Master, the Developers, and the Testers. The Product Owner is the person overall in charge of the product. They give the rest of the team the deliverables and various requests that the team needs to do the work. The Scrum Master is like the great enabler. They take care of the day to day operations, and remove any road blocks from the team. The Developers provide the deliverables and solve problems. The Testers take what the Developers create, and provide feedback to improve the final product. So our Product Owner asked us to make a website to sell vacation packages. Our Scrum Master communicated with the Product Owner to ensure we had clear expectations. We then collected User Stories, which we’ll discuss later. The Developers worked on code to deliver the product asked, as well as provide clear communication to The Testers on what the features were meant to do and how to do them. The Testers tried out the features, and provided clear feedback to the Developers to improve upon the product. Each team member has a clear role to play.

User Stories was a key practice to drive our process. A User Story is a specific interaction or experience an end user has or might have. These stories can come from focus groups, surveys, or just regular conversations. Something like, “I want to be able to see the top vacations in my price range.” This one specific interaction can be a wealth of information! The user wants to see multiple vacations, they want to be able to sort them, and they want to customize this list based on preferences, in this case price. We then implemented our stories, and then passed them along to the testers with the stories. This way the Testers not only provided feedback from what we did, but if we satisfied the intention of the story.

One of the biggest strengths of the Agile Methodology is working around interruptions or unexpected challenges. When working on the product, a clear point of tension happened when the Product Owner asked for a complete shift in focus in between sprints. She wanted to shift the focus from all vacations to just Health packages. We were easily able to pivot and ship the product due to taking our existing framework and adding what was requested.. With proper communication and feedback, this could have been mitigated in an even greater manner. Clear communication needs to happen back and forth in what I’ve learned is called a feedback loop. A great example for how we tried to fix this problem is the below email, “Good Morning Christy,  
 I saw mention of setting a price filter for user results. If you don’t have any packages that match that price filter, what type of feedback do you want to show your customers? An error message, a prompt to adjust their prices, or a prompt to contact a representative? Is there a different solution you’d prefer to use? Please get back to me at your earliest convenience so we’re on the same page.

-Regards, Dan”

This email not only is a clear pull from the Product Owner for more information, we also provided a clear push. We began a weekly stand-up between teams, a Scrum of Scrums so to say, so we could head problems off before they could start.

We used many organizational tools in our process. Our Daily Scrum is a meeting for the entirety of the team. The meeting is not run by one person, but by the team itself. We also used Jira, a scheduling and interactive to do list the entirety of the organization can use. We re-assessed our priorities to get things done with a planning poker approach. Each team member is given a set of cards, and then vote on items to be done with high value and low value cards. If there’s any disagreements, a discussion is had with the extreme highs and lows presenting their view points. This item was then placed into it’s prioritization with respect to the others ordering. All of this was input into Jira. Prior to a sprint, we could then review our ordering and make a plan to get as much done as possible. These tools and practices really showcased the strength of the Agile Process. The best part is not being locked down to any one process. If something didn’t work, we encouraged communication. Our Daily Scrum meetings really facilitated this. Just because we ran things like this didn’t mean every team had to.

There were ups and downs as well as growing pains for trying out this Agile-Scrum Process. It’s most definitely a learning process to shift how organizations work, and there were pain points in getting people who aren’t used to shouldering responsibility to shine. On the other hand, it was extremely easy to pivot on problems. Morale was high since we got a lot of self expression. Nobody felt left out, and I think the team members respect each other now. I think the Agile approach was a massive success, and the best way to approach this project. Additionally, the project can be picked up and continued at any point thanks to the practices already in play.