ChadaTech Sprint Review and Retrospective

SNHU Travel Project

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**Various Roles of a Scrum-Agile Team**

In the CS-250 Software Development Lifecycle course, I explored the various roles within a Scrum-Agile development team. My team at ChadaTech, a software development company, had recently transitioned from the traditional waterfall methodology to the agile approach. We were assigned a project for SNHU Travel, a travel agency looking to update their website and tools to attract more clients. Throughout this project, I had the opportunity to engage in tasks related to all the key roles of a Scrum-Agile team.

The first crucial role is that of the Product Owner, who is responsible for ensuring the team understands the product backlog, arranging and prioritizing it for quality, gathering feedback from clients, and making project decisions (Cobb, 2015, p. 35). As the Product Owner in this project, I ensured the team understood stakeholders' requirements and differentiated wants from needs to prioritize essential features (Cobb, 2015, p. 63). I organized user stories and created a product backlog, which served as a guide for the team's work and project flow.

The Scrum Master is another important role, responsible for guiding the team in adhering to the Scrum framework. This includes facilitating Scrum events, ensuring easy-to-understand product backlog items, and assisting team members and the Product Owner (Cobb, 2015, p. 36). As the Scrum Master, I conducted daily 15-minute Scrum meetings, keeping the discussions focused on the team's accomplishments, daily goals, and any potential obstacles (Cobb, 2015, p. 42). My primary goal was to make Scrum and agile principles clear to all team members.

The development team comprises developers who work on completing sprints and delivering "potentially releasable increments of 'Done'" (Cobb, 2015, p. 38). In this role, I, as a developer, was responsible for delivering working code for review by testers and the Product Owner. I also created a document with questions regarding changes in SNHU Travel project requirements, requesting in-person discussions to clarify any confusion or uncertainty.

The testers on the team play a vital role in testing the product and ensuring its quality (Cobb, 2015, p. 80). As a tester, I collaborated with the team to create test cases that clarified the requirements for each item in the product backlog. Upon receiving a project increment, I conducted testing to determine if it met the completion criteria or required further improvement due to quality issues or bugs.

In summary, during the SNHU Travel project, I actively participated in the roles of Product Owner, Scrum Master, developer, and tester within the Scrum-Agile team, contributing to the successful transition from the traditional waterfall methodology to the more flexible and efficient agile approach.

**SDLC and User Stories**

Throughout my participation in this course, I applied the Scrum-Agile approach to bring these user stories into action. User stories play a significant role in elucidating a project's requirements and generally follow the format: "As a <role>, I want <to be able to do something> so that <benefit>" (Cobb, 2015, p. 65). This approach aids in breaking down the project into manageable chunks and clearly identifies the target audience, their desired actions, and the underlying reasons for their importance.

I had the opportunity to craft my own user stories using the mentioned format, simplifying the process of expressing the significance of each user story. My user stories included a priority level, a concise description of their importance, and an acceptance criterion outlining the specific requirements.

**Achieving Project Completion and Adapting to Changing Requirements**

The agile methodology embraces an adaptive approach to product development, as stated in the Agile Manifesto, where agility emphasizes "responding to change over following a plan" (Cobb, 2015, p. 22). In a scrum-agile environment, it is not obligatory to fully define all requirements before commencing a project; it is acknowledged that changes are a natural part of the process (Cobb, 2015, p. 24). During the SNHU Travel project, the initial requirements for the "Top Five Destinations List" were to have a link that leads to a scrollable list, arranged from most popular to least popular, with links to travel packages. However, these requirements later evolved, leading to the need for a PowerPoint-like list, allowing users to click "next" or "previous" to navigate between locations. Thanks to the scrum-agile principles, the test cases and user stories were promptly updated, clarification on the changes was provided, priorities were adjusted, and the project was successfully adapted.

**Effective Communication**

During the SNHU Travel project, I recognized the crucial importance of effective communication within our scrum-agile team. To ensure everyone was on the same page, I utilized both scrum meetings and email interactions to seek clarification when needed. When the project requirements changed, I wanted to make sure I fully understood the new specifications. So, I took the initiative to write an email to Christy, the product owner:

To: Christy

Subject: User Story Clarifications

Dear Christy,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to take a moment to discuss the user stories we received for the project. Overall, I found the user stories to be quite helpful, particularly due to some of the straightforward requirements. For example, User Story One provided clear instructions the details greatly facilitated our understanding of your expectations.

However, while reviewing the other user stories, I noticed a couple of areas where additional clarity would have been beneficial. One such instance is User Story Three, which only asks if everything should be included in the app. This leaves room for interpretation and could lead to misalignment between our understanding and your vision. It would be immensely helpful if you could provide more specific requirements or guidelines for this particular user story. Furthermore, I believe it would be beneficial to have further clarification on your overall expectations for the project. Specifically, I would appreciate guidance on how you would like us to utilize the information provided in the user stories. Should we create new test cases based on these requirements, or would you prefer us to integrate them into our existing test cases? Clear direction in this regard would enable us to ensure that we are meeting your needs effectively.

To ensure that we are on the same page and can proceed with the project smoothly, I kindly request your input on these matters. Any additional details or specific instructions you can provide would greatly assist us in delivering a product that aligns with your vision. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response and the opportunity to address any concerns or queries you may have.

Best regards,

Veronica

In the email, I praised the clarity of some user stories but also highlighted areas where additional information was necessary. Specifically, I mentioned User Story Three, which lacked sufficient details and could lead to misunderstandings. I also sought guidance on how to approach the test cases in light of the new requirements. By reaching out proactively and requesting their input, I aimed to foster open communication and ensure we could proceed with the project smoothly. Writing this email allowed me to address any uncertainties and demonstrate our team's commitment to delivering a product that aligned perfectly with the product owner's vision.

**Organizational Tools and Scrum-Agile Principles**

Effective communication within a scrum-agile team is vital for ensuring customer satisfaction and overall team success. An organizational tool commonly used is an online informational radiator, which consists of critical information continuously updated by the team (Cobb, 2015, p. 139). An excellent example of such a tool is JIRA, which facilitates constant transparency among team members through its "Scrum Board" and other features. Communication stands as a cornerstone principle in a scrum-agile team, and leveraging information radiators, like JIRA, significantly contributes to achieving this essential goal.

**Scrum-Agile Approach**

In my assessment, the scrum-agile approach employed for the SNHU Travel project had both advantages and disadvantages. One of the drawbacks was the difficulty in estimating the project's duration due to the allowance of changes, which could extend the project scope and potentially affect deadlines. However, the benefits of the approach outweighed the drawbacks. Working closely with a team facilitated efficient information exchange and feedback, resulting in improved work quality and quicker project completion. The flexibility allowed for changes in requirements, which would have been challenging with limited communication. The feedback loop, effective communication, collaboration, and well-defined member roles contributed to the project's rapid and efficient completion. Considering the specific requirements of this project, I believe the scrum-agile approach was the right choice. While other methodologies may be suitable for different projects, effective communication between the client and the team was crucial in understanding requirements and facilitating changes, ultimately leading to the successful delivery of working software that met project requirements. Overall, I am convinced that the benefits of the scrum-agile approach made it the correct choice for this particular project.

References

Charles G. Cobb. (2015). The Project Manager’s Guide to Mastering Agile: Principles and Practices for an Adaptive Approach. Wiley.

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