SNHU Travel Project: Sprint Review and Retrospective

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As the Scrum Master for the SNHU Travel application development project, I led the team through a Scrum-Agile approach to deliver a robust software solution. Our goal was to design and implement an innovative travel booking platform that aligned with SNHU Travel’s mission to expand its client base. Throughout the project, we utilized Scrum principles to ensure flexibility, collaboration, and continuous improvement. This retrospective reviews the contributions of various Scrum roles, our experience in completing user stories, managing interruptions, and evaluating the effectiveness of the tools and Agile process in achieving our goals.

The success of our project was largely due to the well-defined roles within our Scrum team, each contributing in unique ways. As the Scrum Master, I was responsible for facilitating meetings, maintaining the Agile process, and removing impediments that slowed the team. For instance, during the second sprint, the development team encountered delays in integrating the payment gateway. By facilitating a conversation with the Product Owner and stakeholders, I was able to address these concerns and reallocate resources, which ultimately helped us meet the sprint goal.

The Product Owner played a crucial role by working closely with the stakeholders from SNHU Travel to prioritize the product backlog. For example, their decision to prioritize the customer registration feature early on ensured that we delivered a feature with high business value right at the start of the project. This focus on the most critical aspects of the application helped build trust with the client, as they could see immediate progress.

The Development Team was self-organizing and committed to delivering high-quality increments each sprint. Their collective decision-making and technical expertise were evident when they successfully broke down complex user stories, such as the trip search functionality, into smaller, manageable tasks. This approach allowed the team to tackle development incrementally while continuously delivering value.

The Scrum-Agile approach was instrumental in ensuring the timely completion of user stories. By working in iterative sprints, the team was able to focus on specific, clearly defined goals for each sprint, ensuring progress was both visible and measurable. For example, during the first sprint, we focused on developing the user interface for the trip search feature. By breaking down the larger user story into smaller tasks—such as creating search filters, designing the interface, and integrating with the database—we were able to complete each component step by step.

The iterative nature of Scrum also allowed us to adapt quickly based on feedback from the Product Owner. For instance, after completing the initial search functionality, we received feedback that users needed more filter options for destinations. This feedback was incorporated into the next sprint’s backlog, allowing us to enhance the feature before final deployment. Without this iterative process, such feedback might not have been addressed until much later in a traditional development model.

Interruptions and changes are inevitable in any project, and the Scrum-Agile framework’s flexibility helped us adapt to these shifts effectively. Midway through the second sprint, the stakeholders from SNHU Travel requested an additional feature for group bookings, which was not part of the original scope. In a traditional Waterfall approach, this request would have required significant re-planning, delaying progress. However, with Agile, we quickly reprioritized the backlog and incorporated the new feature into the next sprint.

Additionally, Agile’s continuous feedback loop allowed us to manage changes in direction without losing focus on the project’s core objectives. By maintaining open communication with the Product Owner and stakeholders, we ensured that the new feature was aligned with the project’s overall vision while keeping other critical tasks on track. This ability to pivot seamlessly was one of the key strengths of using Scrum for this project.

Effective communication was at the heart of our Scrum-Agile approach. Daily stand-ups were one of the most valuable communication tools, as they provided a regular touchpoint for the team to discuss progress, identify roadblocks, and plan the day ahead. For example, during one of our stand-ups, a team member identified a dependency issue between the user authentication system and the trip booking feature. By addressing this issue early, we were able to adjust the sprint plan and avoid delays.

Sprint planning meetings were also essential in aligning the team with the sprint goals. During these meetings, we reviewed the backlog, estimated user stories, and agreed on the tasks to complete for the upcoming sprint. These meetings ensured that everyone had a clear understanding of their responsibilities and allowed us to tackle high-priority features first.

Organizational tools such as Jira were invaluable in managing the progress of our project. Jira allowed the team to break down user stories into tasks, assign them to team members, and track their progress. The Kanban-style board provided visibility into the status of each task, helping us identify any bottlenecks and ensuring that work was completed in a timely manner. Using Jira, we were able to monitor sprint progress in real-time, adjusting the sprint backlog as necessary. This transparency enabled the team to stay aligned with the sprint goals and made it easy to manage changing priorities. Moreover, Jira’s reporting features, such as burndown charts, allowed us to track our velocity and measure how much work was completed in each sprint. This helped in forecasting future sprints and setting realistic goals.

The Scrum-Agile approach offered numerous benefits throughout the SNHU Travel project. One of the key advantages was the ability to receive continuous feedback from stakeholders, which allowed us to make incremental improvements to the application. Additionally, the iterative nature of Scrum ensured that we delivered working software at the end of each sprint, providing the client with a tangible product to review and test.

However, there were also challenges. The need for frequent client involvement required significant coordination, and at times, the lack of detailed upfront planning led to some uncertainty about the project’s long-term direction. Nonetheless, the Agile process’s flexibility allowed us to adapt quickly to these changes, ultimately delivering a successful product. Overall, the Scrum-Agile approach was well-suited for the SNHU Travel project. Its ability to accommodate changing requirements and prioritize client feedback made it the best choice for this development effort.

The Sprint Review and Retrospective provided valuable insights into the development process for the SNHU Travel project. The Scrum-Agile approach fostered collaboration, flexibility, and continuous improvement, allowing the team to successfully complete user stories and adapt to changes. While there were some challenges, the benefits of Agile far outweighed the drawbacks. Moving forward, this approach will likely prove beneficial for future projects at ChadaTech, especially as the company transitions from Waterfall to Agile methodologies.

Reference

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