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Final Project 7-1

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Professor Konishi

* Demonstrate how the various roles on your Scrum-agile Team specifically contributed to the success of the SNHU Travel project. Be sure to use specific examples from your experiences.

There were four roles involved in the SNHU Travel project, and all of them contributed to this project's success in their own ways. The Product owner helped communicate between the technical team and the client, set precedents, helped mitigate issues, and created an overall narrative for the project. The Scrum Master, who helped with facilitating Scrum Events, removing challenges slowing the team's progress such as making sure that we would still be on track with the development changes, and ensuring effective backlog management. The Developer, who designed and created code that followed traditional software engineering practices, participated in peer reviews, and implemented design to have enough room for changes in our project. Lastly, we have the Tester, who created test cases for each function, so that we could essentially understand exactly what the requirements needed to be able to do, and not do. This helped fool-proof the design and assure quality during the development stages of the application.

* Describe how a Scrum-agile approach to the SDLC helped each of the user stories come to completion. Be sure to use specific examples from your experiences.

An agile approach to the SDLC helped improve each of the user stories in many ways. One of these ways was by holding a focus group in which the Product Owner was able to directly talk with each of the customers and get an even better understanding of what functionality they had wanted from the product, with a face-to-face meeting. A second example of the improvement an agile approach introduced was with the utilization of the product backlog. This helped us understand the importance of each item, prioritizing them based on the overall success of the application, in addition to helping us understand the exact grasp our scope in the project had when it came to integrating new features into the application.

* Describe how a Scrum-agile approach supported project completion when the project was interrupted and changed direction. Be sure to use specific examples from your experiences.

One way that the Scrum-agile approach helped overcome the interruption and direction change was through the openness within the design of the application. This made it so each function within the application could change without destroying the entire project, unlike Waterfall which would have been disastrous. Prioritizing the functionality of the application and partitioning the different elements with a product backlog made the compartmentalization process easy, which in turn, also made iteration of development easy with the centralization of everyone's work within the team. I think that the openness and communication within the team helped everyone work better together as well, because in the meeting where the Product Owner announced the change, though everyone may have been worried, this problem was easily mitigated through the understanding of how big a change this maybe, but the clarification with the face-to-face meeting. I think this allowed everyone to respond to this change in a great way as everyone was set up for success, and no work had to be thrown out to meet the change in the customers' product design.

* Demonstrate your ability to communicate effectively with your team by providing samples of your communication. Be sure to explain why your examples were effective in their context and how they encouraged collaboration among team members.

For my week 5 Developer Journal, I wrote an email to Brian and Christy, the Tester and Product Owner. This email was regarding a prior email that did not have detailed information regarding what the product they had wanted me to design, and program had included. I wrote the following:

“I would love to schedule a meeting with both of you to discuss what is needed for development to move forward successfully within the new scope of our project. I would like to discuss new test cases, as well as functional requirements for our product, given the change. It is difficult for me to conceptualize the implementation of our old functions, and use cases, given such a big change, and it would really help to finalize these details before I move forward with development.”

I think that this communication was effective because 1. I was honest that I had needed help and was direct about what I had needed help with. I think that communication in this matter is important when it comes to Agile, mainly because in the Agile meetings, we even announce that we may have trouble with some things, and this opens the floor for collaboration and understanding from other people that may lead to a better solution, in addition to deepening the relationships of each member of the team. I think that this encourages collaboration between team members because if you are willing to open about something you are not good at, or maybe having trouble with, people will be able to connect with you on a better level, because everyone makes mistakes and wants others on their team to be successful. In addition, I think that asking to schedule a face-to-face meeting also helps encourage collaboration, because I will be able to sit down with them, and we can work together so that I can fully understand what it is they want from the project, so I can develop the best application.

* Evaluate the organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles that helped your team be successful. Be sure to reference the Scrum events in relation to the effectiveness of the tools.

The organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles that were most helpful were:

1. Primary focus on the customer need facilitated by constant improvement of customer experience.

This principle was helpful mainly because the Product Owner was able to get a lot of information from the customer in addition to the users of the application for user stories. I think that this is really needed because getting a thorough understanding of our application and what it is supposed to do is necessary to hit the target and contribute to overall success.

2. Strategies and tactics are highly adaptive, responsive, and change is welcomed.

This was incredibly important because when the direction of the project had been changed, we were able to respond to the change quickly and effectively. In addition to this, we did not have to change the entire application and scrap the whole project due to the main centralization and iteration within the project itself when it came to changing singular functions. We were able to take the parts that needed to change and only change those which did not affect any other part of the application, which was incredibly helpful. We would not have had the same experience if we were to do any other type of SDLC because of how fast and responsive Agile is.

3. Effective cross-functional collaboration with a clear intent is supported.

Cross-functional collaboration is necessary in Agile mainly because the small teams are reliant on each other to be successful. If these teams do not communicate, then the team would not be successful, as we had seen above when I was talking about the email, it was important that I communicated and collaborated with my team members in order to fully understand the changes they had wanted me to make as a Developer.

* Assess the effectiveness of the Scrum-agile approach for the SNHU Travel project. Be sure to address each of the following:
  + Describe the pros and cons that the Scrum-agile approach presented during the project.

The pros of Scum-agile

1. The fast development cycle helped us track the different types of functions and fully assess our progress
2. The cross-functionality of our team really helped us understand each other's jobs and integrate well with one another when it came to creating the project.
3. The face-to-face discussions helped a lot when it came to communicating different ideas and topics, especially if they were important changes in the project.
4. Communication with the customer was helpful for understanding the main functionality with user stories.
5. The product manager was an incredibly important asset for the team to have as the directive and the overall functionality of the team was vastly improved with the management of the product backlog.

The Cons of Scrum-agile

1. One of the cons of Scrum-agile is that it is difficult to truly assess the length of time a project may take to finish. In the beginning of the project, it may also be difficult to communicate with the customer how long it may exactly take to complete or create the project given the unpredictability of Agile.
2. The incremental delivery of the different functions may serve as a double-edged sword. Given that we are tracking progress with the completion of the different functions within the project, that may mean that we must put out the application without some of the needed functions required by the users meaning that we will have to continue development while the application is live, potentially causing big problems.
3. The fast-paced agile approach could be bad for future developers and engineers as the documentation can suffer greatly in the case that there either is no time to create truly detailed explanations of the processes of different functions or the choices of why something was made a specific way.
4. In addition to being difficult to assess the length of time a project may take to finish; it may be hard to allocate the correct resources if we do not know what may be fully needed for a project to be successful. The fast-paced iterations and the high chance that something may change or not be communicated properly may end up in the company spending more money than originally given for the scope of the project in addition to taking a longer time.
5. In the case that the customer is not totally clear in the beginning of what they want for the project, it may decrease the overall quality. This is due to the lack of understanding of what the application is supposed to do function wise. I can say that in the beginning of the project I had a bit of difficulty fully understanding some of the user stories. It seemed as if what they had wanted did not line up exactly with what the customer had wanted, as both had different understandings of what the project had to do, which made it difficult to fully assess what had to be done.
   * Determine whether a Scrum-agile approach was the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project.

I think that the Scrum-agile approach was the best for the SNHU Travel development project. I think this is mainly because of the issues that occurred during the project, and the discussions we had with the users and the customers really needed a faster paced environment in which to develop this application. If we were to not have a fast-paced environment, we would not have been able to fully meet the customers' needs, and we would not have been able to meet the established deadline they had wanted.