Sprint Review and Retrospective

In order for a Scrum-agile team to be effective, every team member must fulfill their obligations that their role dictates. This alongside effective and clear communication practices ensure productivity remains high during project development. In my experience as a Scrum Master, I ensured daily scrum meetings remained on topic and any side conversations that needed to happen were taken note of to have after the daily scrum. During daily scrums I would ensure all team members are having their needs met. Aside from keeping meetings on topic and handling the needs of the team, I would also ensure that the principles of scrum are being upheld throughout the development process. As a product owner, I oversaw communication between shareholders/management and the scrum team. This would ensure that any expectations of the shareholders were being communicated effectively to the team. On top of this, I would also maintain the product backlog so that the team could effectively see where progress was on the project, what needed to be done, and what could be added to it. I was also in charge of creating user stories in the form of “As a [type of user], I would like to [some task] so that I can [goal].”. I would also gather feedback from stakeholders to share with the team so that any adjustments could be made accordingly. As a tester I oversaw developing test cases for user stories provided to me. I would have to edit these test cases as feedback regarding the features in question were sent back. An example of this was with the feature of seeing top travel destinations. Initially the test case involved scrolling down to see all 10 destinations. This changed when feedback was provided back saying they wanted to have a slideshow style presentation. Rather than the test case asking to scroll, I changed it to clicking through a slide show to ensure that the 10 destinations are present. As a developer I oversaw the creation of features in the user stories. This involved effectively communicating any questions regarding implementation to ensure that I wouldn’t have to redo to much work when feedback was provided. I accomplished this through effective emails asking questions about how the stakeholders or users wanted certain features to look like and work.

In regards to user stories, the scrum-agile approach ensured that there was room for questioning from all members of the team. This allowed for developers and testers to get a clear understanding of how the user or stakeholders wanted certain features to be implemented. I wrote an email to the product owner in the position of a developer wanting to know specifically how a certain feature should be implemented. Knowing this would ensure that I implemented it correctly the first time. Assuming this line of communication wasn’t open, I would have likely received feedback regarding the correct way to implement it and would have had to redo it accordingly. This in turn creates less work for the tester as well to ensure they don’t have to revise to many test cases. On top of this, the freedom scrum allows for developers to approach development how they want to. This creates healthier work environments where everyone is happier to be.

The scrum-agile approach ensures that each feature has been tested and toned for deployment at the end of the project. Assuming issues were to arise during development, the effective communication practices that were implemented ensure everyone is made aware quickly and the appropriate measures could be taken. This can be applied to the same situation depicted above. I as the developer created a list of top travel destinations to be seen by the user. This feature was tested, but the shareholders decided they wanted to focus on “wellness” vacations and for it to take the form of a slideshow. This feedback was sent back and I as the developer went in to adjust the feature as requested. Thanks to this communication development quickly recontinued and I as a tester was able to make revised test cases to the feature to appropriately test it according to the changes made. This example shows how the scrum-agile approach handles changes in direction during development to take care of them effectively and quickly.

Communication has been a reoccurring factor during this review/retrospective. This is because of how vital it is towards the development process. During last week’s communication practice, there was a question directed towards the product owner regarding what Vision Quest’s expectations were. I replied indicating the goals Vision Quest had for the sprint, and when there were follow up questions, I addressed those as well. Ensuring all questions are being answered and that the goals are being understood by all parties is vital towards ensuring development runs smoothly. Another example of good communication practices during last weeks communication activity was encouraging the other members to pitch into the conversation. The goal of communication within a scrum-agile approach is to encourage all team members to participate and get involved with the discussion. If this doesn’t occur the possibility of misunderstandings increases, which in turn could cause development to slow down. To me this is the primary reason why effective communication is so important.

To me the most important organization tool is a burndown chart. For the purposes of my team, the burndown chart was essentially the learning modules page. Being able to see what I had done vs. what I needed to do each week helped me plan and allocate time to each assignment due that week. Regarding principles that helped my team be successful, adaptability was vital to ensure that I was able to adapt to changing circumstances throughout the week. Reallocating time during the week when unexpected events occur assisted me greatly this semester for this project.

In regards to the SNHU Travel project, the scrum-agile method was extremely effective for the development of the project. The use of scrum meetings gave me a solid understanding of the features the project had. Having this large project broken up into smaller aspects also helped make the whole process easier to handle. Although there are several aspects of scrum-agile that are good, there were some that I could see leading to issues. As scrum projects have no definitive end date there can be issues surrounding when to call the project done. The need for everyone involved in the project to be educated on the scrum process can also result in negative experiences. These cons, however, I believe are handled under the agile methodology through its principle of adaptability. Changing how scrum is implemented to suite the needs of a project or company allow for scrum to be tailored to suit the needs of the team. For our purposes I believe the scrum-agile method was suitable for the SNHU Travel development project and overall was beneficial towards improving its development process.