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Sprint Review and Retrospective

ChadaTech selected the team responsible for developing an application for SNHU Travel to be the "guinea pig" for a new software development lifecycle methodology. That new methodology is the Scrum-agile approach, and it worked exquisitely.

For a long time, ChadaTech has utilized the waterfall project management method, which can create silos, bottlenecks, and a structure too rigid to bend to the nature of software and web development projects. In turn, team members and management have fallen into the cliché separation associated with corporations. However, scrum-agile project management has changed that. As a result, this document is the team's first Sprint Retrospective.

There are multiple roles within the Scrum-agile project management model: product owner, scrum master, developer (frequently referred to as the development team), and tester. The roles and their contributions over the latest iteration are detailed below.

* Product Owner: The Product Owner is responsible for bridging the gap between the development team and the client. During the latest sprint, the product owner created and maintained the product backlog, which holds the various user stories the team will tackle during each iteration. Additionally, the product owner had a focus group with end-users to determine what features they would prefer to see in a travel application. Lastly, the product owner met with SNHU Travel frequently to update them on the team's progress, which is how we discovered the project had to pivot slightly, but more on that topic later. The Product Owner's actions directly contributed to the sprint's success by giving the development team direction for moving forward.
* Scrum Master: The Scrum Master is an intermediary between the development team and the product owner. However, the Scrum Master is still a part of the development team. Over the last iteration, the Scrum Master designed the charter, which led the team's interactions with each other and the team as a whole. The Scrum Master also facilitated the daily scrum, which serves as a daily 15-minute meeting for everyone on the team. In summation, the Scrum Master directly contributed to the sprint's success by encouraging teamwork, fairness, and several other Agile principles that are key to an effective and successful team.
* Development Team: The development team is responsible for the "groundwork." The developers created the code for the testers and the product owner to take to the client for feedback. The developers are the individuals that must exercise the most flexibility in their work. Over the last iteration, the developers pivoted the product successfully and efficiently thanks to the flexibility inherent to agile project management methodology. They developed several features and completed numerous user stories throughout the sprint.
* Tester: The tester(s) is(are) responsible for ensuring that the development team's code meets all the requirements for a client's project. However, a tester's sole responsibility is not limited to verifying a function works as expected. The tester is also responsible for considering what the client and end-users may want that they were not aware they wanted. In the last iteration, the tester quickly modified their tests to accommodate the change of direction determined halfway through the sprint. The tester executed their responsibilities effectively to contribute to the project's success.

Scrum-agile fundamentals assisted with the success of the project in numerous ways. First, daily scrums and user stories allowed the development team to tackle different tasks as they came up and distributed the work. Additionally, user stories permitted the team to work on aspects unrelated to the application's travel packages. The change in direction was referenced throughout the member descriptions and contributions above but never clearly identified. In the middle of the sprint, SNHU Travel provided new details that changed the project's direction. SNHU Travel determined they would prefer to focus on wellness retreats rather than niche travel packages for their travel site. Usually, that kind of change would wait until the end of the sprint to be implemented. However, due to time constraints, the project shifted immediately. Agile's inherent flexibility allowed the project to make such a dramatic shift. Accommodating sudden changes is another example of how agile fundamentals contributed to the project's success. The waterfall method would not have the flexibility required to meet the client's new expectations while maintaining the initial time frame for deployment.

There are several tools that the team researched and considered utilizing during the sprint, such as VersionOne, Rally, Jira, and Microsoft Azure Boards. Many of these tools are platforms with software implementations of agile physical devices such as Kanban boards, product backlogs, and other aspects that encompass an information radiator. The team could have adopted the physical versions of the agile tools listed above. However, to implement agile methodology across ChadaTech, the SNHU Travel development group decided to utilize Jira for agile project management. This will allow additional teams to interact with each other in the future by decentralizing the agile project management tools employed by each team. In addition, using tools like Jira to create an information radiator encourages transparency and communication between team members.

Communication is a fundamental aspect of the Scrum-agile approach. Since projects move so quickly, excellent communication skills are vital to thriving in a Scrum-agile project. Below are some examples of effective communications between team members. Names have been omitted and substituted with respective positions to eliminate any privacy breaches.

*Sample One*

Dear Product Owner and Tester,

I am contacting you both regarding the latest updates to our project. With the latest changes to the project, I would like to ask a few questions about the status of the project and expectations for it moving forward.

1. How will the changes in direction affect the Product Backlog and user story prioritization?
2. What changes are you expecting to the program's functionality? For example, how will tests be updated to accommodate the shift for the product focus?
3. What should be considered a wellness/detox vacation?

This information is pinnacle to my ability to move forward with the project. I will continue working on tasks that do not directly relate to shifting to wellness/detox vacations. Still, I would appreciate it if you could get back to me with answers to the questions above to start working on updating the software accordingly.

If I have not heard from you by the next business day, I will contact you directly to avoid the development bottleneck that may result from not having the information above.

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,

Development Team Member

Please take note of the developer's directness in their email. The communication is effective because it asks direct, answerable questions and explains their reasoning, rather than expressing vague concerns. Additionally, the developer informs the product owner and the tester that the developer will follow up, which allows the product owner and tester to forgo a reply in favor of a verbal conversation. Finally, face-to-face communication is a principle of agile because it encourages collaboration and removes ambiguity introduced by the emotionless text of an email.

*Sample Two*

Dear Product Owner,

Hello. I am contacting you to request additional information to test the development team's products for the SNHU Travel project. The user stories are pretty straightforward, but I do not have any information to test the functionality. If you could provide a list of travel packages with the following information, it would benefit the testing process and ensure our team delivers the best product we can.

* Travel package name
* Location of the travel package
* The estimated cost of the travel package
* An image for the travel package
* A short description of the travel package
* Criteria for what is considered a niche travel package and their respective type(s)

I would also like to request additional information about travel package preferences for user profile creation.

* Existing SNHU Travel packages
* Desired SNHU Travel package preferences for users to choose from when creating their profile

Thank you very much for your assistance, and I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Best regards,

Product Tester

In the example above, we again see direct communication through answerable questions that do not require additional questions and explanations for why the sender needs the information they are requesting. Another aspect of the emails above that facilitates effective communication is how the senders utilize bullet points. Individuals do not want to spend time trying to determine the core purpose of an email, and providing bullet points allows the reader to identify the most critical information. Straightforward, direct communication encourages collaboration by removing obstacles to giving and obtaining information.

In summation, adopting the Scrum-agile approach was hugely successful amongst the team responsible for the SNHU Travel project, especially since the project saw a pivot halfway in. Furthermore, the Scrum-agile approach to project management was likely the best strategy because it granted flexibility that traditional approaches to project management cannot provide. Naturally, all project management methodologies have pros and cons. However, in this instance, the pros of the Scrum-agile approach surpassed the cons. A brief overview including but not limited to the benefits and drawbacks of the Scrum-agile model respective to the SNHU Travel project is below.

*Benefits of Scrum-agile approach:*

* Flexibility to shift directions after development has already completed a significant portion of the project.
* Scrum-agile provides the ability to integrate feedback from SNHU Travel as the project progresses.
* Remove silos associated with waterfall programming where individuals silently take on designated tasks and create code that only they understand.
* Create transparency across the team, allowing individuals to assist each other with assignments.

*Drawbacks of Scrum-agile approach:*

* Reduced documentation due to emphasis on action.
* Challenging to introduce new members to the project due to the lack of detailed documentation.
* Individuals comfortable with the pace of traditional project management methods may find Scrum-agile daunting or overwhelming.

The Scrum-agile approach has proven to be a highly effective project management method. It provides flexibility to the software development life cycle unavailable to ChadaTech's current waterfall method. In addition, it fosters a more cohesive corporate culture by encouraging transparency, communication, and collaboration. Therefore, Scrum-agile should be adopted across ChadaTech to increase the versatility necessary to keep up in the modern world of software and web development. Together, all teams across ChadaTech can achieve amazing feats by employing Scrum-agile methodology and making exponential strides toward a mutual vision of success.