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CS-250

16 APRIL 2025

Sprint Review and Retrospective:

The roles in this scrum team are important for multiple reasons. Each person handles their own piece or process in the project. Without one piece, the whole would fall. Starting from the top, the product owner plays a pivotal role in the decision-making process for the outcome of the final product. They met with the client to ensure their vision is met to the highest degree possible of the team. When the client wanted to switch to health-related travel packages, we shifted with the product owner’s help. They also are the lead for backlog refinement and making sure requirements are clear for the rest of the team.

Then we have the scrum master. This person helps by being a sort of a servant leader. This person facilitates the sprints and removes any impedances that they can to help the team be more efficient. This person is the coach of the team. They help the developers and testers in understanding and refining the agile principles and practices. The scrum master is also the leader of the daily stand-up, sprint review, and more. Having them in this role ensured that the meeting stays on topic and did not drag on longer than needed.

The developers are the ones that do the bulk of the coding for the story points during the sprint. They determine what can be accomplished in each sprint and work to complete those tasks. These guys collaborated often to ensure high quality code. They quickly worked with the product owner to make sure the changes to the travel packages met all expectations. Developers work to satisfy the definition of done for each task without going too far or adding too many features.

Testers work in conjunction with the developers and make sure that the definition of done is well defined through tests. They ensure edge cases are tested and bugs or security issues stay to their lowest point possible. In agile, they test continuously to ensure bugs are found as soon as possible to reduce rework and regression. For SNHU Travel, they ensure that all buttons and slide actions worked correctly. They also checked to ensure the proper packages were being shown to the end user.

The user stories made the tasks attainable. For each of the features that SNHU Travel wanted to add, we created a user story for them in their most basic forms. This allowed everyone to understand what was needed for the completion of the task. The story points also gave the developers and testers a way to discuss and determine time estimations and the tools required for each task. With SNHU Travel, we broke the tasks down and labeled them either small, medium, or large based on task size. Then we iterated each story point and refined them further to ensure all requirements were outlined. This allowed the developers and testers to have a clear understanding of what needed to be done. Each story point had a title, number, size, statement, and acceptance criteria. This allowed for better backlog refinement. With this data we know which tasks needed to be completed first and which will require the most work. Because of this, sprint planning is made easier. The team is better able to collaborate and complete each task based on the definition of done. As the project progresses and the team works together more, we can gain speed and efficiency with user stories. We get better at estimating time and we get better at collaborating on each story. This helps us create better quality products over time as we refine our system.

There are many interruptions that can slow the team down. A few examples of these are bugs, change of features, or a clint’s shift in priorities. With the waterfall method, this would cause issues because most of the planning is done in the beginning. Agile allows for these changes and pitfalls and expects it to happen. When we plan and iterate as the project progresses, we are better able to work around it and produce the required results without having to do excess rework or having our past work become as obsolete. Since things are handled in sprints, the product owner and scrum master can help each other to shuffle around user stories and refine the backlog as needed. We can also change entire user stories without much issue or setback. In the case of the SNHU Travel snafu where we were switching vacation types. This was as easy and switching up a user story and adding some different content. Because we were on Agile, it was an easy change to make that had very few issues with the prior work that was done.

Communication in agile is one of the most important aspects of agile. It allows for the quick changes and high-quality releases. Getting the best communication possible allows for more learning and more growing within the team. Each person can help another get past roadblocks or bounce ideas. It also allows for a better understanding of what is required for each task and ensuring each piece is done before moving on to the next. Some of the ways we work on our communication include daily stand up, retrospectives, and sprint planning. These allow the team to create a gameplan and to fine tune their plans and processes together. For SNHU Travel, there were a few things we needed clarification on. The way I got this clarification was through email. When writing, making your questions in such a way that guides the answer you are looking for helps with getting the information you actually need. Here is an example. “Would we want an error message to show if the user enters a price point that is lower than the lowest price vacation, or would we want it to only show an error message for inputs less than 1?” In this quote from an email I wrote, the question gives possible options for the answer. This helps with clarity and gives an understanding of what information I am looking to receive.

Organizational tools help keep the team up to date. They also help with communication and planning. Things like story points allow the team to see what feature or addition will be made and what the use case is. It allows the team to estimate the time it takes to complete a job as well. Things like burn up or burn down charts help a team see progress as it is being made. This helps the team stay motivated while also giving them insight into changes that need to be made if progress is not going as fast as they need. The backlog helps the team understand what work needs to be completed and when. The product owner generally controls this, but the team can also adjust as needed which allows for better preparation and a cleaner workflow.

The SNHU Travel project that we did was our first take at an agile approach. It worked really well when we had to adjust mid sprint to work on making the recommendations lean toward health and wellness vacation packages. If we were in a waterfall system, it may have been more challenging to complete that task in the same time frame. There would have been work done prior that would have had to be redone in the planning area. Since we plan for each sprint as we go, we were able to save time and resources when making this shift in content. Agile allowed us to be more accepting to the change than we would have been if we were in that waterfall mindset. For this project, the scrum-agile approach was the best choice. From the beginning it seemed straight forward. Which would have made it feasible to use the waterfall method. But, if we did all the planning and designing before working on the actual tasks, we would have wasted more resources and time with the waterfall method because of the changes we had to make part way through the project. With agile we were also able to test as we moved which allowed us to find bugs sooner and complete each task before moving onto the next one. This created a more efficient process.