Bryan Pirrone

Sprint Review and Retrospective

Throughout this course, I have learned about the agile management methodology and have assumed the role of a product owner, scrum master, and the development team (developer and tester). The assignments in this course have had me assume the previously stated roles and perform their duties and responsibilities for the SNHU travel project. This opportunity has given me significant insight into each role of the agile management methodology and different approaches for each of these roles.

All the roles in the agile management methodology are important to create a team that is self-sufficient and works efficiently and effectively. The product owner has a very important role within the agile management model. The product owner is responsible for ensuring the company's vision is clearly defined and understood by all. Other duties include clearly expressing the product backlog items, ordering the items in the product backlog to achieve goals and missions, optimizing the value of the work the development team performs, ensuring that the product backlog is visible, transparent, and clear to all showing what the Scrum Team will work on next, and ensuring that the development team understands items in the product backlog to the level needed (Cobb, 2015). The product owner interacts with the scrum master, development team, company executives, and users, to ensure that the user stories are easily defined and interpreted. As a liaison to the team and the users, the product owner can act as a communications link between the two to clarify any discrepancies or ask clarifying questions. By embracing the team and this model, the product owner sets the mood for the organizational climate. These tactics and responsibilities helped the team achieve its goals and allowed for an unhindered flow of communication between all team members.

The scrum master is another role in the agile management team. The scrum master lays out the work to be performed during the sprint, with collaboration from the product owner (Cobb, 2015). The scrum master also serves as the referee or coach during the scrum meetings. The scrum master will ensure that the team stays on topic, address sidebars after the scrum meeting to ensure that all members of the team have a chance to talk, and that any cross-collaboration or teamwork that is required to accomplish the day's tasks are addressed. The scrum master can add a lot of value to the scrum meetings by finding techniques to address any backlog items and to help the scrum team understand the need to clear and concise backlog items (Cobb, 2015). The scrum master's involvement is dependent upon the maturity of the team members and their knowledge and acceptance of the agile model (SDLC - Agile Model, 2013).

The development team consists of individuals who perform the duties of a developer and a tester. The developer has duties and responsibilities that help the team function. The developer takes the user stories and helps modify them to fit the user’s wants and needs (Cobb, 2015). By having this perspective, the developer can work closely with other development team members, product owners, and the scrum master to determine the user's intentions and to get clarifications regarding the functionality of the product. Initial discussions with the user can create vague user stories and therefore make it harder to deliver a product that meets the user's intent. With the correct information from the user, the team can collaborate on user stories with well-defined acceptance and failure criteria. The developer also has an important role when discussing changes with the team. Since the agile management methodology embraces change, the developer needs to convey to the testers that the changes are attainable and that the work that they have put into the project already is significant. The developer has an instrumental role in keeping the team aligned with embracing change cohesively and professionally. The testers take the elements given by the user and help create quantifiable user stories (Cobb, 2015). As previously discussed, the initial interactions and communication with the users will provide the context for the user stories. Any amplifying information needs to be acknowledged and accessed early to ensure that the team can reach out to the users with clarifying questions. The scrum-agile approach helped each of the user stories come to completion by allowing the team to collaborate on tasks, ask and receive clarifying information from the user, and enabling the team to adjust and adapt to obstacles in a professional manner while in a good work environment.

One of the key elements of a successful agile model is communication (Cobb, 2015). While communication is the most effective when accomplished face-to-face, modern technology has allowed for this to be achieved without having everyone in the same room. The recent pandemic has led to the adoption of many forms of alternative communications like zoom, skype, facetime, and other audio and video programs. This still allows for that high level of face-to-face communication, without individuals having to be physically present. Emails and phone calls are also adequate when addressing smaller, less technical issues. The follow-up communication that we utilized allowed us to redefine and hone our user stories to ensure they matched up with the user's vision. This communication also allowed our team to adapt and adjust to the redirection emailed to us by the user. Initially, the user stories we developed based on our initial conversation with the user-led the to the conclusion that they wanted a website with other pages to the website. The follow-up email requested a slideshow to present the top destinations, destinations based on the user's travel profile, and applicable deals. This feedback allowed us to create a product that met the user's desires. These communication techniques were also utilized during last week's group project. This allowed us to collaborate among team members and address individuals’ needs, questions, and recommendations. Although we didn't utilize the above-mentioned tools, we could have used them if they were required. Since agile methodology embraces change and is consumer-driven, these tools allowed us to fully adopt these principles.

Some of the organizational tools that were found useful revolved around the information radiator. This visual representation of completed, not yet started, and in-progress tasks was useful to allow the team to be able to prioritize tasks, request peer-programming when required, and acknowledge tasks that were complete. This also allowed the team to be able to view the product backlog. This tool was extremely useful to the team, allowing them to deconflict issues, coordinate between team members, and prioritize important items. Different forms of information radiators are scrum boards, Kanban boards, calendars, and programs like Azure Boards.

Regarding the effectiveness of the Scrum-agile approach for the SNHU travel project, there were several pros and cons. Some of the benefits of agile that were evident in the SNHU travel project included: functionality that can be developed rapidly and demonstrated, by promoting teamwork, and that agile is a good model for environments that change steadily (SDLC - Agile Model, 2013). This gives a lot of flexibility to developers, delivers early partial working solutions, and is suitable for fixed or changing requirements (SDLC - Agile Model, 2013). Since most markets are not fixed and are continuously changing, this model is conducive to allowing for changes as time progresses. Some of the cons of agile that were faced during the SNHU travel project included how heavily this method depends on customer interaction, the very high individual independency, and that there is a lack of documentation (SDLC - Agile Model, 2013). Due to unclear instructions given by the user, the team had to adjust to changes as further communications occurred. This led to a direction change in the product, which, fortunately, wasn't too difficult. Had the requirements changed drastically, then the project may not have been able to have been completed by its deadline. With all aspects considered, I believe that the agile management approach was the correct one for this project. The values of individuals and interactions over processes and tools, customer collaboration over contract negotiation, and responding to change over following a plan allowed for the team to be successful.

References:

Cobb, C. G. (2015). *The Project Manager’s Guide to Mastering Agile: Principles and Practices for an Adaptive Approach* (1st ed.). Wiley.

*SDLC - Agile Model*. (2013). Https://Www.Tutorialspoint.Com/. https://www.tutorialspoint.com/sdlc/sdlc\_agile\_model.htm

‌

‌