The project began with a strong perspective from a Product Owner. As the owner, it was my job to facilitate the conversation between then clients and the development team. The client has a problem that needs to be investigated. As a Product Owner, I need to define the problem the clients are trying to solve and what they project to be a valuable solution they will be able to use. Then, as a Product Owner gather the user requirements needed to make the clients product a success and develop a product backlog by breaking the solution down into deliverables and then prioritizing the product backlog. The product backlog artifact will have all the all the features that were discussed in priority and each backlog item will have a user story value statement or use case.

After the Product Owner has finalized the client and product requirements and the backlog is set, the Scrum Master will lead the organization of the development team to facilitate productivity by protecting the development team from distractions or interruptions. Establish collaboration among team members. Promotes current engineering practices. Protects the development time blocks. And makes the product backlog visible through many tools. Further the facilitation of daily standups to ensure the development team has everything they need to do their best work.

The Tester role created user stories based on the value statements develop earlier in the process. The Tester took the role of the user and examined the user story for any disparities between the client’s requirements and what has been developed. If there any discrepancies, then this is escalated to the Product Owner to confirm if there was miscommunication in the value statement or the development team developed a different feature.

The development team produces finished features that are on the product backlog. Translating the processes into a sequence of instructions the computer can execute. Development team need to always be kept in the loop for any changes in information as client’s needs could change during a sprint and a potential loss of development time could occur. Therefore, there are many short phases to display the current product and leave room for any changes to happen that will happen. This feedback look is important for maximizing the value of the project, client’s investment, and the developers time.

Given a waterfall approach instead of an agile approach, each role’s responsibilities would have been the same but the collaboration between the roles. During waterfall the product manager would have been impacts by the inflexibility given any changes mid-waterfall. Since waterfall development does not include any for additional requirements in its scopes like agile development does with sprint cycles this change would not make the backlog. At least not until the beginning of the next waterfall planning phase. Scrum Masters would be impacted by their ability to facilitate collaboration and managing the visibility of the product backlog. These backlog items would be unchanging and little management would be needed except for the preventing of ne items to be added during the waterfall. The developer would be heads down and little feedback would be given throughout the development to see if the features being developed are the right features. The tester would only be able to test the features in the testing phase and that if the feature are the right features. This finished and hand off process if not great for a client whose needs change with the market.

I would consider the market and how quickly customer’s needs change. For example, since software products never expire and the product owners cared enough to keep the product up to date, then the agile methodology would be considered. Another factor I would consider is the number of team collaborating to meet the needs of the client. If there is a small number of collaborators, probably one team would suffice for waterfall development while larger team would be needed to agile development which favors more feedback from external team members. Further considerations would be the product backlog. How many items on the backlog are there and what is the size of the user story? If the feature is relatively small, then less collaboration and feedback will be needed to bring the product to life. The simpler the project, the more waterfall.

Tools used to help facilitate the agile process were the user value statements which were developed from speaking with the clients and their needs. The framework question “As a <type of user> I want to <perform some task> so that I can <achieve some goal>” helped keep the feature the means to the end and not the end itself. The other tool that branches off of this is the user stories the tester developed to examine the feature from the user’s point of view and how they would be interacting with the product.

Collaboration within a team is important so a sample communication between the product owner and the tester would look something like this:

To: [christy@EngineeredFeatures.com](mailto:christy@EngineeredFeatures.com)

From: [brian@EngineeredFeatures.com](mailto:brian@EngineeredFeatures.com)

Subject: Requesting Information for User Stories

Hi Christy,

Currently I am developing test cases for the user based on information from the user stories provided. In order to better understand the customer and the experience the client wants to develop, I have additional questions ensure the test cases are developed to resemble the user’s actual experience as close as possible.

User Story #1

* How many top company destinations do you want to display to the user? 5, 10, 15 vacations?
* Will the information in the results list automatically update once a certain criteria is applied or will a button be needed to apply the changes to the results list?
* Will the filter criteria be on the top of the vacation list or to the left of the vacation list?
* Will the top vacation be listed from most popular to least, top to bottom or bottom to top?
* Will the top list view be integrated into the overall search results list or separate?

User Story #2

* How many different types of vacations would generally be allowed? How much is too much and when is there too little?
* What are the different types of vacation collections that will be filterable?

User Story #3

* Is other currency going to be considered? Is there capability to filter prices using other currency?
* Will this filter be a drop down or a free text field?

Thanks,

Brian

Product Tester

Product Owners are juggling a lot of different variables that influence the productivity of the team which effects the bottom line. It is important that your communication is structured and clear, so the information is easily digestible. A quick summary followed by a sectioned bulleted list will do. This encourages collaboration by bringing issues from downstream back up to the Product Owner where the issues are not quite as visible on the tactical level.

The agile development methodology used in my project was requirements analysis. An initial interview between the Product Owner and the stakeholders revealed all the problems and wishes that the clients had for the new features. When interviewing the best practice is to get them in the environment, they are comfortable with, then having a normal conversation but asking probing questions. In the design phase, the user value statements derived from the planning phase were used by the tester to crate compelling user stories. The user stories were helpful for the developer to create the features described in the user stories. Next up is the design phase where the developers program the features based on what is on the user stories and match as possible. Working closely with tester to ensure the stories are representative of the feature. Testing phase involved the user of the product to use it and give feedback to the Product Owner and any additional suggestions that could potentially be added to the product backlog artifact. Then the cycle repeats.

When the project was interrupted and the client wanted to modify the slides show of the top destination, the suggestion from the client was able to make it into the sprint since there was feedback sessions built into the development of the product just incase any changes were implemented. Agile has shorter turn around times for the product which supports changes to be implemented before development has gone too far and the developers are spending much longer hours refactoring the code for the new needs.

The first class I took in the computer science program was Computer Science’s Role in Industry. Based on the major trends in the industry of Big Data, IoT, Robotics, and Cybersecurity, the two roles I saw myself in were a combination of Big Data and IoT. My role within these industries would be a developer to creates programs to automate work. Since beginning the computer science program there have been other areas of interest that arose. Outside of the usual coursework I am learning web development and learning how the web can be enabled in the world and the immense power of the internet. If I am going to make an impact on a lager scale its going to take the effort of many tech-savvy individuals instead of doing the work all by myself. Product Owners are much like entrepreneurs who are looking to elicit user needs and then outsource the work using other people’s talents. I would identify more as a Product Owner than an entrepreneur. I would like to gain more experience in building software applications and implementing agile development in my personal projects so I can commit to features and finish. Using project management tools to add features on a backlog and the sub features that will make this feature come to life.

Scrum boards are a great idea. Do you think having a physical scrum board of a digital scrum board, or both would be best? In a digital environment it can be seen and shared through internal communications, while a physical board could increase morale and give the team a sense of accomplishment and purpose since they can visually see the progress they are making. Trello is a type of project management software that is digital and physical is stick notes since they can be moved around easily. How often will the board be updated and when? Daily? Every scrum?

Asking from the perspective of a product owner.

Very thorough post.

This communication represents who I would like to be in the industry. I eventually plan on leading the development of software products and take on clients. I would ask soliciting questions to determine what their needs are trying to solve their problems. Asking questions shows that you care about other people’s thoughts and opinions while getting the information I need to make an informed decision.

My personal goal is to develop a product that can impact millions in either scale or magnitude. I want to become a proficient programmer to either develop my own solution or help other entrepreneurs who are solving a problem and don’t have any technical expertise. This will allow me to learn from them which will enable me to start my own ventures.