**SNHU Travel Project Development**

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Within a great team there are various roles that contribute to its success as well as its failures. Teaming with agile methodology consists of a Product Owner, Scrum Master, and the Development team which has both developers and testers. The Product Owner position is a one-person role that is responsible for maximizing the value of the product and the work of the development team. The Scrum Master is also a one-person role in which they lead and coach the team along the development process. They also help those who are not within the Scrum team understand if their collaboration with the team is beneficial or not. The Development team is exactly how it sounds. They are the developers of the product itself as well as the testers. These team members determine if each sprint is considered “Done” or not by putting their products through series of tests. This is the chain of command of a Scrum Team and how they contribute to the success of a project.

Throughout the work of our project with SNHU Travel, we have spent time working within different roles of the Scrum-agile team. Each role plays a vital part in the development and execution of the project. To begin, the Product Owner takes on the project with the client, SNHU Travel. They discuss the wants and needs of the travel site with the Scrum Master and ensure clarity on the requirements by asking questions. The Scrum Master then collects the data and information to pass on to the development team. The development team begins to work on the project and is then faced with changes that change how the site will be used. In an agile team effort, we were able to adapt and make these changes without making changes to the deadline or quality of the project.

The Scrum-agile approach utilizes user stories to aid in building the product. User stories are the general explanations of software features written from the end user prospective. In doing so, this ensures that the software features will provide value to the customer. Some of the user stories within this project were creating a list that catered to the user’s profile settings. This feature allowed the end user to have the ability to set the parameters within their profile that would allow the site to create vacation packages and “hot deals” that the customer may be interested in. The use of user stories allowed the developer to determine the priority level amongst other stories to be completed. This agile approach helped the developer easily understand the feature of the software and the criteria of acceptance to help determine if that user story could be considered “Done” or not.

This same concept was utilized with the completion of the other user stories. These stories include a top 5 destination list that show the most popular locations to travel to with information and types of travel pertaining to each one. Another story was being able to set parameters for choosing what kind of travel the user is searching for. This feature helps the end user find which options are best suited the type of experience for the user. In addition to these, there is also the use of a customized list that is generated based on the user’s previous travels. This will make sure they have the most relevant information presented to them. Breaking the features up into these user stories allowed them to be completed with minimal stress and kept the production of the software easy to complete.

Agile methodology has many benefits when it comes to project planning and execution. One of the benefits is the flexibility to change and maintaining communication with the client throughout the process. Through the process of building the software, the client wanted to make an adjustment to the use of the site. This minor change was simple, however, required changes to information that would be provided to the user. The travel site focused on vacation packages, but a minor shift allowed the company to also provide focus for mental health get aways. In making this change, the developers needed to know the information about the change and if there was a delay in the projected completion date. Thankfully, the team was able to make the changes easily and without any major interruption to the project deadline. This flexibility in project change is what agile methodology is about. The client wanted to better fit the needs of its customers, and the team was able to easily make the changes in a timely manner where the deadline was not pushed back, and other tasks were not affected by the changes.

Just as communication with the client is essential with agile methodology, so is communication within the team. Communication can be as simple as saying hello to one another and as drastic as discussing the failures of the project. The scrum team should all be able to communicate with each other and be able to ask questions or assist one another without offending each other. In doing so, interactions should always be respectful and in a positive manner. During the duration of this project, we have demonstrated effective communication in emails as well as in Scrum meetings. Such emails have been discussing the updates to the user stories from the Scrum master to the Product owner, as well as the developers and testers. Making sure all who are affected by the information are included in the email is how we ensure we all stay on the same page. In addition to the emails, we also make sure to address the concerns in a face-to-face environment so the those receiving the information can understand the severity of the message. The contents of the email addressed the specific roles and how they would need to accommodate as well as any questions that pertained to their work.

Our team has been able to accomplish their goals by utilizing the many tools available as well as the methods we have discussed so far. Some of these tools have been the use of VersionOne, the online tool for teams to stay on track with goals and sprints, stay up to date on tasks and be able to stay connected throughout the duration of the project. VersionOne has also aided in keeping the Scrum Meetings quick and on topic which helps reduce time wasted and helps maintain maximum productivity for the team. Another tool has been User Stories which we mentioned earlier. User Stories have been a huge role in the success of the team because it helps the developers manage their workload and keep them from feeling overwhelmed and they can be updated on their progress within VersionOne during Scrum meetings. In doing so, they can ask questions or work through issues and still provide quality, and the rest of the team can feel at ease as they contribute to their portions of the project.

We mentioned plenty of positive attributes to using Scrum-agile approach, but with any process, there can also be some cons. Some of these cons have been the risk of the team falling behind schedule if someone is not pulling their weight and the chance of the customer making changes to the software. Luckily, we have had a helpful team and were able to stay on track. However, the client did make some changes during the process of the project and caused some delays within user stories. We were still able to overcome this minor setback and end up on top. Another disadvantage is that it is hard to scale the overall project since it is taken by strides and if one team member does not show up then the workload must be reassigned which could potentially cause setbacks for the team. Overall, the team has been very successful with this method and has proved to be the best approach for the SNHU Travel development project.