Review and Retrospective

The role of a scrum master during an agile Sprint is to aid in finding value for the whole team. The scrum master works with the development team to ensure the goals of the project are always in view and allows the team to excel on their own with insightful input. The scrum master worked with the product owner to identify what user stories had the highest priority and what sizing scale each story would be. Finding what features were the most beneficial for the stakeholders set up the sprints of SNHU Travel for success because the developers and testers now knew what to focus their efforts on. The scrum testers were able to take the user stories provided by the product owner and create test cases to guarantee the features were produced and functioned as expected. The scrum developers were also able to take these test cases and create features that matched exactly what was requested without adding extra functionality or waste. The scrum master worked closely with the testers and developers to meet these feature requests but also focused on ensuring the whole team continued following the scrum-agile methodology throughout the project. As the testers communicated with the product owner and the scrum master to clarify requirements, the team communicated as a whole to guarantee the success of the SNHU Travel website.

As the user stories were written, the priority and scaling for each feature were then identified. With the highest priority stories being implemented into the project first, the stakeholders were able to see the features they valued the most come to fruition. This allowed them to change how they expected the product to be viewed based on rapid feature creation through agile, and the product was modified accordingly. Eliminating waste through early requirement revision kept the project flowing smoothly. The SNHU Travel website was initially going to be a list of available packages but was edited to become more of a slideshow presenting the locations individually in more detail. Putting user stories together gives the scrum team a better idea of what the stakeholders and users are looking for in a product and provides weight to the work the team completes. As the tester asked for clarification, the product owner was able to revise each user story to eliminate some of the ambiguous requirements instead of specified targets.

Unlike the waterfall methodology, the agile methodology allowed for constant change in project direction. When the SNHU Travel website shifted from a list view to a presentation view, the scrum team could change their focus easily without needing to change documentation and requirements. New test conditions were required to be made by the scrum testers, but since features are more compartmentalized than in a waterfall methodology project, modifications to the website are easily switched out as needed. The website also changed its focus from a “Top 5 Destination” website feel to a health and wellness travel site. This change required a few destination changes but was easily implemented due to the fluid nature of the agile methodology. While agile allows for these rapid modifications of focus, the waterfall methodology would not have been able to provide such ease of change.

When the testers on our scrum team needed clarification on how exactly filtering would be completed, they emailed the product owner asking for a more detailed user story to avoid unnecessary rework. They asked about how the filter section should be displayed, how the orientation of the minimum and maximum pricing information should be presented, how clicking the search button should affect the filter section’s view, and what the initial pricing order should be (low to high or high to low). These questions allowed the product owner to go through the user stories and revise how the information is presented, tested, and developed. Without this communication, there may have been too many assumptions to produce what the stakeholders wanted which would result in production waste due to misunderstandings. Constant communication among all members of the scrum team helped create a successful project throughout the course of each sprint.

For our scrum team to be successful, we were able to create a team charter to identify what role each team member would take. This charter also allowed the team to understand our project risks, success criteria, mission statement, rules of behavior, and communication guidelines. Along with adhering to the communication guidelines addressed in the team charter, we were able to use Jira to provide easily identifiable data for feature statuses amongst the team. Once one feature has been placed into the completed status, that team member was able to select a new feature that has been included in the sprint and begin work on it. Whiteboards such as Jira show progress throughout each sprint and provide the product owner with the information they can bring back to stakeholders such as completion percentages or burndown reports.

Selecting an agile methodology for the SNHU Travel project had both advantages and disadvantages. With no strict documentation to follow along the development process, the scrum team has the freedom and flexibility to complete requests as they are added to the next sprint. This can also become a problem when more features are requested than anticipated and meeting deadlines for project completion becomes more difficult. While project deadlines can loom overhead, using the agile methodology for the SNHU Travel website was the right choice as stakeholders can rapidly see progress in their invested project. If something doesn’t look right, it can be modified in the next sprint to meet their expectations and satisfy the customers quickly. When the team was met with two shifts in project scope, we were able to make the change swiftly and effectively. The list view to slideshow view modification was handled well within the team, as was moving from general travel to a health and wellness retreat focus. Meeting these requirements as they were added shows the effectiveness of the agile methodology.