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The success of this project truthfully began with the product owner. It has been their job to conduct client interviews and provide me with thorough user stories to pass on to my team. The user stories helped us to identify the expectations and requirements of the product we were developing. Instrumental to the success of a project is a clear vision of what our end goal is meant to be. The second you lose sight of where your ambitions lie is when the project will be in jeopardy.

I as the scrum master helped to facilitate daily stand-ups, sprint planning, and reviews. It has also been my job to facilitate communication between the developers and our product owner to ensure the aforementioned “product vision” stays clear throughout the development lifecycle. Throughout the project lifecycle many emails were exchanged between myself and other members of the team in order to help us stay on track with what we were working on, how our backlog was looking and what our next steps were. As working components moved on to the testing phase, emails were regularly exchanged between myself, our product owner, and the test team.

The development teams contributions to the success of this project can not be emphasized enough. They were the ones producing the actual product itself. As I was provided with user stories I relayed them to the developers and went over the specifics during our daily stand-ups and sprint planning meetings. As work carried on with the development of the product the team found some holes in the stories and would occasionally have to ask for a bit more clarification. These concerns were my responsibility to relay back to our product owner for a more transparent picture of what the story was trying to say.

Our tester was another key player in not only the success of the project, but also the definition of the user stories. As they developed test cases it prompted questions such as “how should this be presented?” or “what kind of vacations do the clients want to see?” As discrepancies as such surfaced we were able to once again prompt the product owner further for better explanations of their user stories and ensure that we were able to provide a functional product which met all criteria.

At one point during the testing phase it was determined that wellness and detox vacations were the new hot thing so we had to refactor our existing code just a bit to fit this newly introduced criteria. Some may see this as an interruption in productivity, but thanks to our agile practices and use of daily stand-ups we were able to identify this change and implement sort of on the fly with very little interruption to our sprint.

As previously mentioned, email communication is huge during the lifecycle of a project. It is a quick and effective way to communicate on changing requirements and identify any holes in the formula we’re working with. Face to face communication is what I value the most on a team however, and we had no shortage of opportunities for that. Our daily stand-ups and sprint plannings gave everyone a chance to voice their opinions and concerns on various aspects of the project.

I found the use of JIRA to be effective in keeping everyone in the loop. I like the home page design which is very reminiscent of a white board/bulletin board. We were able to pin all of our important points in one place and team members could provide status updates and check off items on the backlog as they were completed. Beyond that I found that an emphasis on face-to-face communication and prompting everyone to air out their concerns at meetings to be quite effective in keeping the entire team engaged and on track to meet deadlines. We worked together to refine the backlog and update it as necessary.

Utilizing an agile approach for this project was the right way to go. Given the nature of the project and the fact that requirements did change mid way when we were asked to change from a webpage layout to a slide show format, I feel it was a wise choice to opt for short sprints and producing small working parts one at a time. This approach lent itself well to the need for refactoring code and refining our backlog properly to fit new requirements in. Had we used a waterfall approach we would have had to backtrack quite a bit when we realized that our format was being changed. The only con I can really identify to our agile approach was that the need for constant meeting and interviewing added up to drag out the project a bit. However, as mentioned, we did have to refactor code mid way, so I don’t think this con would really apply in this specific situation as the meetings wound up helping us identify a change and react accordingly rather than have to refactor an entire project. Over all I’d say that agile was a very successful approach to this project and I’d be inclined to use this approach in future projects.