Scrum-Agile Process Retrospective

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CS-250: Software Development and Lifecycle

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December 8, 2023

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During this sprint everyone involved did a great job of their part of the project. As Scrum Master my job was to maintain the backlog, run the daily stand-up meeting and ensure communication between the Product Owner, Testers and Developers and try to remove any hurdles that the team may come across. Our Product Owner had to act as a liaison between the team, stakeholders, and end users, as well as writing user stories to add features and functionality and determine what the acceptance criteria was. Next our Testers job to revies the user stories and then develop test cases for each user story carefully stating what the pass/fail states are of the software. Finally, Developers task was to complete the backlog in what would be the best they saw fit and created accurate estimates as to how long it would take to complete each user story.

The project for SNHU Travel began with the Scrum Master developing a charter to establish rules and expectations for the project. In the charter it was established what the criteria for success which included a deadline, who was on the team. The charter also gives a brief overview of client expectations, needs and a mission statement. The most important item in the charter is the rules for communication which establish when and how information is disseminated to each of the parties involved in the process. Next the Product Owner set up a focus group with the end users of the product to determine what their needs and desires of the end users. From the information the backlog was then established with User Stories. The User Stories contain the information for the Development Team to make the appropriate decisions while trying to organize their workflow and what their sprint goals should be. Next our Tester took the user acceptance criteria and then created test cases. In these test cases step by step instructions were written for testing. While writing these instructions each step must have clear pass-fail criteria established for each step of testing. Following this our Developer went in and used the test cases to write the code for the program. It was also their duty to provide estimates on how long each of the user stories would take to complete. They also must make sure that their code is well commented on so that changes can be made quickly and easily.

The people involved are key, but we followed a process called Scrum-agile which aided in how decisions were made. While this was a vastly over simplified example all of the key steps were there. The first week we started with a brief overview of how agile works and how it compares to the older waterfall method. During this time, we reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of each. We started with a meeting with our client SNHU where we learned of their vision for the product that they were asking for. This meeting consisted of the stakeholders, Product Owner, and Scrum Master. The Scrum Master then used the information detailed in the meeting to develop a charter that set the expectations for everyone involved in the process, it set business rules as well as rules for communication so that there were few surprises. The rules of communication are set so that everyone knows how communication will be completed. This led us to the focus group where our Product Owner found the needs and desires of the End Users. During the meeting we took notes so that way we could go on to write our User Stories so that we could populate the backlog for the development team to organize their work and accomplish stories in the order which they saw fit. Our Tester then used these stories to create Test Cases. While we were working on creating these test cases, we received an email that the Product Owner has some questions about the functionality of the product, and we had to make some adjustments to our test cases to more align with the End User desires. A meeting was then held with the Development where we discussed different methods of estimating process the most popular of which was the Planning Poker which was a method that uses cards placed on the table anonymously, each card has a number on it and each team member places the card on the table face down as to not influence each other’s opinion. Also, during this time in development, we got word that SNHU Travel was repositioning their business to align with a new trend in travel for detox and wellness travel. We then changed our code to align with these changes that were communicated to the Product Owner from the client.

The key for all these processes is communication. This can be done ins several methods, we started out with two face to face meeting with the clients to determine what their vision for the product they would like us to develop for them. A focus group was used to get the specific details needed to determine what features the End Users would like us to complete. Emails were another keyway our team communicated throughout the course of the project. Here is a sample of one of our emails:

Product Owner,

We ran into a problem during the team encountered a problem during the testing of the new product. This issue was encountered yesterday at the end of day and solutions were discussed at the stand up. We currently do not think that it will change the goals for our sprint but the problem needed to be disclosed to you so we can communicate with the stakeholders that there may be a slight delay.

Regards,

Scrum Master

This type of communication its key there were also emails that were sent to the tester the Product Owner noted in the Test Cases and a email to the Developers that stated the client has decided to pivot in their goals and tried to see if we could accommodate them. This shows one of the key strengths of the Scrum-agile process.

While our team did not take advantage of tools such as Jira or Azure Boards, which may have been helpful if we were to scale our project up. But our team did utilize spreadsheets to track the data in the User Stories and Test Cases. These tools can help with tracking where a project is at and give greater transparency to the team and help disseminate information at a higher velocity to where it needs to go.

Overall, for this project the Scrum-agile process was effective, while this project was small enough waterfall could have been. Since we were trying the process out, I feel that we got a feel for how it will work and can try to scale the process in the future. The major strength of this process it encourages communication between all parties involved to be done often. With the sprints being no longer than two weeks it also gives the client a chance to give their feedback and allows for changes to be made to increase customer satisfaction. Though if communication is not kept up or is unclear then the process can quickly fall apart. The project is also broken down into smaller parts, this allows the project to be given the ability to make changes on the fly for unforeseen circumstances allows for the faster development of the product and gives the ability to deliver small parts at a time rather that all at once. This also allows for problems to be found during development much faster and gives a greater chance of delivering a cleaner final product.