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**Final Project**

Agile and Waterfall are exciting ways to approach a Development Project. Both have their pros and cons, and sometimes they overlap. Knowing the methodology behind Agile and Waterfall can help us understand which one we should choose for our business or project. The most central principle that I took away from Agile was communication. Communication in Agile is foundational because Agile requires every team member to be involved in almost every step of the process and to accomplish that goal, communication becomes central. Let us examine how communication played a role in the development of the SNHU travel site.

In week three, communication is already playing a pivotal role. When the Product Owner met with the focus group, her job was to communicate well with the focus group, interpret that information, and effectively communicate that to the Scrum Team to develop ideas on what kind of travel website users would want. During week four, the Tester had to take the opinions of the Product Owner and turn them into pass/fail criteria that they could apply to the website during and after the development.

During week five, our communication principles were put to the test when the Product Owner informed us that the direction of the SNHU travel site would be changing directions from a blanket travel site to pushing health and wellness getaways. There are several takeaways I want to take from this change. First, the Product Owner gets the mandate from upper management, then comes to the entire team and unveils the new requirements for the website. Second, because of our culture of communication, we can synthesize this information and change accordingly. Changing our testing requirements, reprioritizing our backlog, estimating whether or not our deadline will need to be changed, etc. Third, because of the nature of how Agile approaches projects using sprints, we do not have to throw the entire project out and start from scratch. Most of the project can be salvaged even after a significant change, and the rest can be reprioritized. Fourth, depending on how far the Development Team is in the project, a considerable change using a Waterfall framework could spell disaster. Thinking about it more thoroughly, a change like this probably isn’t possible in a Waterfall framework; the rigid way that the development takes place and the episodic nature of communication in Waterfall makes a change like the one we synthesized during week five impossible in a Waterfall framework.

The two communication tools I want to focus on in Agile are not very flashy, but they’re foundational in creating a culture of communication among the Scrum Team. The first is the Scrum Team meeting. “These meetings usually take place at the same time and place every day, and they’re short fifteen-minute meetings to plan the next twenty-four hours. These are not in-depth meetings but rather used to keep everyone on the same page and united as a team. Team members will share their successes, blockers, make quick decisions and identify a shared understanding of everyone is working on.” (Atlassian 2019) Some people call these meetings “Standups” because of the high energy transient nature of the panels and, everyone is supposed to be standing up. When it comes to setting a communication culture, the daily Scrum Team meeting is a fantastic tool. The second tool I want to focus on is the Kanban board. A Kanban board can be as complex or as simple as its users want it or need it to be.

Simply put, a Kanban board is a way to visualize your work physically or virtually. A Kanban board is a great way to organize work among teams because, at any time, you can look to see what someone else is working on, what the team needs to be working on, what’s been done, which projects are high priority vs. low priority. Again it is a great tool that can be molded to however simple or complex you need it to be, and it builds on my thesis that communication is at the very center of Agile.

A great example of how I communicated effectively is a quote I pulled from my week six discussion post where I assumed the role of Product Owner, “*The first practice that I think will be most effective in keeping us all in communication is a daily 15-minute scrum meeting, this will give us ample opportunity to get on the same page.”* Here I’m pushing us towards transitioning from Waterfall to Agile, and again like I am now, I’m pounding that drum of communication. Furthermore, when it came to my role as the Product Owner, I stressed my role as a flexible problem solver to the team. I tried to communicate this by saying, “*For now, I just want to be the fireman, if there are any fires that the team is dealing with or fires that they think will come up in the future I want you to come to me so I can help put them out.*” As a Product Owner, the job can be meeting with stakeholders one day to rolling up your sleeves and helping remove obstacles that the Development Team are struggling with the next. Here, when it came to transitioning from Waterfall to Agile, I wanted to make sure that the team knew they could come to me with obstacles they were facing to better help the Team transition.

The Agile approach is just that agile and ever-changing. When it comes to the effectiveness of delivering the SNHU travel site, I think that Agile did what Waterfall could never do adapt to a change in the market in real-time. Agile is not without its challenges. As much as I’ve talked about how excellent communication is in this paper, it is also Agiles greatest challenge. Getting a team to buy into these principles and take them seriously could be a significant challenge for anyone. Missteps in communication could cause chain reactions that cause problems further down the road. Waterfall holds a slight advantage here: communication is not as important day-to-day as it is in Agile. In the end, Agile is a compelling Development framework that has a considerable advantage in adaptation to changes and innovation.

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